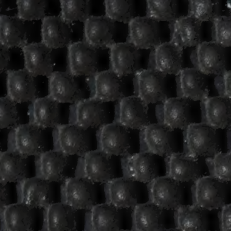


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2nd Sess., 34th Parl.
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Government
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E-5 1990

E-5 1990

ISSN 1181-6465

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 35th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 4 December 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Organization

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

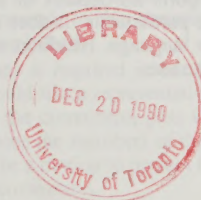
Première session, 35^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mardi 4 décembre 1990

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Organisation



Chair: Cameron Jackson
Clerk: Franco Carrozza

Président : Cameron Jackson
Greffier : Franco Carrozza

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Don Cameron

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario
Éditeur des débats : Don Cameron

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 4 December 1990

The committee met at 1545 in committee room 2.

ORGANIZATION

Clerk of the Committee: Good afternoon. My name is Franco Carrozza. I am the clerk of the committee and I am here to conduct the election of a Chairman. The procedure of the committee is that I will open the floor for nominations. If there is only one nomination I shall declare the Chair elected. If there are two members nominated we will proceed to an election. Should the first member receive a majority then we will ask that member to become the Chair. I will open the floor for nominations.

Mrs McLeod: I nominate Mr Jackson, the member for Burlington South.

Clerk of the Committee: Are there any other nominations? There being no other nominations, I shall ask Mr Jackson to take the chair as the Chairman.

The Chair: I want to thank the member for Fort William for the nomination and say thanks for the confidence that the members of the committee have expressed in electing me as Chair.

By way of short explanation, I would suggest for members who are unaccustomed to committee work that it is most helpful—you will see here the recording services of Hansard—and the microphones work best if we remain seated and speak directly to the microphones. That is of great assistance. I was at a committee hearing yesterday when new members were standing up. I felt it would be best I remind all members that it is very helpful to Hansard.

We also have with us someone from the Clerk's office. You have met Franco, who has been assigned to our committee as our clerk, and his assistant, who is from Hansard. I understand that, but perhaps we could have her introduced.

Miss Brooks: My name is Peggy Brooks. I am from Hansard.

The Chair: Yes. We appreciate it. I just wanted to explain your function to the committee.

I guess the next order of business is the election of the Vice-Chair. The procedure has been explained and therefore the Chair is open to nominations.

Mr Daigeler: I would like to nominate Margaret Marland, the member for Mississauga South.

The Chair: Are there any further nominations?

Mr G. Wilson: I would—

The Chair: The member for Kingston and The Islands may wish to close the nominations.

Mr G. Wilson: So closed.

The Chair: All those in favour? I am pleased to declare the member for Mississauga South the Vice-Chair for this committee.

The Chair: The third traditional motion that is required in our business—

Mrs Marland: Mr Chairman, if I may, I accept that nomination and that vote and I express my appreciation to the members of the committee for my nomination as Vice-Chairman. I look forward to meeting with all the members of this committee and to some very productive days and months ahead. We will have some very important matters to deal with that will come before this committee.

As we all find that it is in the committee stages that we are able to really do the work of the Legislature, it is very realistic to realize that what goes on actually in the House itself when we are either in question period or in debate becomes traditionally very partisan. I have only five years' experience—six years, I guess, now—at Queen's Park and my experience is that the all-party legislative committees that are the most successful and the most productive in terms of the best interests of the people of this province are those committees that look at the matters before them very fairly and very equitably and deal with them, as far as possible, in a non-partisan forum. It is that non-partisan forum that I think most of us have enjoyed for our experience on the legislative committees. So I hope that will be the kind of productive work that this committee will be able to achieve in that kind of atmosphere.

Thank you for the nomination and the election as Vice-Chairman.

The Chair: At this point, the next order of business would be for us to accept nominees for the business subcommittee of this committee. By way of explanation, I should advise all members that the purpose of this subcommittee is to assist in ordering up business, to meet informally, in camera, but certainly not to take up committee time by working out certain of the details to assist this committee. It recommends to this committee; it does not make decisions on our behalf.

The subcommittee is required in our rules and orders and therefore we would like a representative of each of the political parties on the committee, plus the Chair of the committee, to compose the members of the subcommittee. I believe there may be a motion to present the names of the members of the subcommittee.

Mr G. Wilson: I move that Mrs Marland, Mrs McLeod, Ms Haslam and Mr Jackson do compose the business subcommittee, that the said business subcommittee meet from time to time at the call of the Chair to consider and report to the committee on the business of the committee, that substitution be permitted on the business subcommittee, and that the presence of all members of the

business subcommittee is necessary to constitute a meeting.

The Chair: The motion is in order, but I would respectfully request an amendment. This is my fault. Could we insert Mr Daigeler, the member for Nepean, instead of the member for Fort William? I apologize for that. That is so recorded? Thank you very much.

All those in favour of the motion, as amended? Opposed, if any? Carried.

The fourth item according to our agenda that has been presented by our clerk is an examination of the budget. We may choose to consider that now. I am going to ask our clerk to give a description of where we are at in the estimates process and what period this budget is to cover. Then we have other business which we will consider, but the budget is a matter which routinely is discussed and dealt with at our earliest opportune moment.

Clerk of the Committee: The budget before you is a copy of last year's budget. It is very straightforward. It is quite common practice for this committee, since last year, to meet when the House is in session. Therefore it does not have some per diems or travelling expenses for the members. However, should the committee meet in the session between the next session, which would be January, February or March, we would have to write a new budget specifically having our expenditures in this budget.

I simply wanted to show you what the budget looks like. However, with your permission I could prepare a budget with expenditures for our next meeting. Then you will have an opportunity to look at it, amend it, increase it, use it any way you wish, and accept it of course if you wish. Basically that is what the budget is about. If you have any questions, I will answer them for you.

Mrs McLeod: Could I just ask for clarification, then. If the estimates committee does sit between sessions of the House, are expenditures for travel from the constituency to Toronto for meetings of the committee covered by the committee's budget?

Clerk of the Committee: That is correct.

The Chair: Clearly this budget does not cover that, although the budget is 1990-91, which is what we have in front of us. The 1991-92 budget is a different budget altogether. Certain expenditures have already been undertaken with respect to this budget, the 1990-91 one.

Clerk of the Committee: This particular one.

The Chair: Yes. This is still a budget. Our actual expenditures could be well known at this point, but we are not sure—

Clerk of the Committee: If I could clarify that, once the election was called, our budgets were terminated. Therefore there are no funds for us to meet. The expenditure of this meeting would be on credit for the next budget.

Ms Haslam: Would I receive a copy of this?

Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

Mrs Marland: I know the material is all contained in the file folder about how many hours we would be sitting and so forth, but perhaps it would be easier if the clerk explains that we cannot, in the time left in this session,

because of our late start, sit the allotted amount of time without sitting when the House is in recess in January, February and March; therefore, it is going to be necessary to have the clerk prepare another budget which allows for the commuting of members plus the per diem for sitting on committees when the House is not sitting.

Because the estimates hearings usually involve ministers and ministry staff, I would assume that all the sittings of this committee would be in Toronto, so we would not need travel expenses other than the commuting of members from their constituencies to Toronto the way they would be if the House were sitting, except they then get the per diem plus their travel allowance. So that probably could be estimated by the clerk in terms of the number of hours we would sit and the number of members who are commuting and so forth. I think when we have that budget prepared, we would certainly be happy to support it.

Ms Haslam: As a point of clarification on that, did you say that the ministers and their staff who will be in here—does that budget also include that the minister must come in?

The Chair: No, their budgets cover that.

Clerk of the Committee: You are quite correct. The standing orders stipulate that all the estimates are to be reported to the Legislature by the third Thursday in November. That is past. It is my understanding that some arrangements are being considered by the three House leaders that may allow us to meet when the House is not in session. If that is the case, then we will require, first, approval by the House leaders to give a specific date, which the committee can make a recommendation on and, second, a budget for the members to appear here tomorrow. That may answer the question from Ms Haslam. The budget is for the committee only, not any ministry of the government.

The Chair: So really we are getting ahead of ourselves with the budget. I think we should put it in perspective. We should be discussing what activities this committee will address itself to now and up to the fiscal year-end of 31 March 1991. Once we come together as a committee to recommend to our House leaders what it is we would like to do, then we will be in a position to determine how much, if any, of a budget we will require.

I think one comes with the other and we can either simply pass a budget which we feel will cover us in the event that we do get permission or we can discuss ordering up our business in the next few minutes or we could agree to meet tomorrow as well to finalize any of these arrangements, which would give me an opportunity to talk to the House leaders.

1600

Mr Daigeler: It seems to me pretty obvious that before Christmas we cannot do too many in-depth estimate discussions any more. In view of the House having resumed so late, I see no other way but to meet after Christmas if we want to do the job that has been given to this committee, which, by the way, is of course a new committee and there is not that much of a tradition yet for the committee itself. If, as Mrs Marland has mentioned, we

want to do a good job reviewing the ministries, I think it is very clear that we have to meet in between this session and the next session.

Mrs Marland: I concur with the comments of Mr Daigeler. I know that when you are discussing which ministries, all three parties will have input into that. I have to leave this meeting now to be the next speaker in the House on the opposition day motion, so I have left the representation on behalf of the PC caucus as to what ministries we would like to hear with Mr Carr, the member for Oakville South. If you will excuse me, I will leave and return.

The Chair: I am at your disposal as Chair. I will take my guidance from you as a committee.

Ms M. Ward: Just one question. I got an impression from a very quick skim over this material, which I just got hold of at one o'clock, and I want to find out if my impression is wrong or not. There is a list of ministries there that the committee had determined would be reviewed last year, and one of them had been. Is it set out for us that those are the ones and that we are required to review those, or is this a process that starts over again?

The Chair: It is a process that starts over again. As far as this year, the 1990-91 estimates year, is concerned, we have done only the Ministry of Natural Resources, which was done in the spring. But we could, with the House leaders' permission, agree to a certain time allocation and a certain specific number of ministries in the rotation as set out in the standing orders. That is basically what we would be discussing now or tomorrow if you so choose. The rotation is set and the selection is quite independent.

Mr Carr: I was wondering if I could move a motion to the subcommittee to bring forward.

The Chair: I am advised that this subcommittee should really meet to discuss that and that we could, if it is the wish of the committee, meet again tomorrow. Franco, in his wisdom, did advise House leaders that we would potentially require tomorrow and therefore it is on our notices. Therefore, we would have to entertain a motion, if not, that the subcommittee meet any time between now and immediately following House proceedings tomorrow, at which point the subcommittee will have met and considered the ministries for consideration by the committee.

Ms Haslam: I would move that we have a subcommittee meeting tomorrow.

Clerk of the Committee: At what time?

Ms Haslam: We already have one set up, do we not?

Mr Daigeler: That is right, I think the subcommittee could meet immediately after this.

Ms Haslam: I would rather we met beforehand rather than right now, before Wednesday.

The Chair: Tomorrow.

Ms Haslam: Wednesday morning or another time.

The Chair: If that is more convenient, that is not a problem. We might just meet briefly anyway immediately following, but that will be to decide when we meet tomorrow so that we are not taking up the committee's time while the three of us look at our agendas. Is that fair?

Are there any other questions with respect to how we are going to order up our time? Tomorrow we will meet and before then, the subcommittee will have met to discuss the aspects of which ministries we would like to present for the House leaders' consideration for approval.

Mrs McLeod: May I just ask what business needs to be dealt with by the committee tomorrow?

The Chair: I would suspect that we should have a budget approved, which we could subsequently amend, but I think it would be wise if we had a budget and specifically had a motion prepared which sets out our willingness to meet early in the new year to look at supplementary estimates of a series of ministries.

Mrs McLeod: May I just ask then, is the subcommittee charged with determining whether or not we will meet in the new year?

The Chair: No.

Mrs McLeod: Second, what ministries will be preparing estimates?

The Chair: The committee has the final say, as I indicated earlier. The subcommittee gets involved with the draw, which is a recommendation to this committee.

Mr Daigeler: The subcommittee is actually the one that determines the—

The Chair: I think that is what I said. But it cannot go from the subcommittee to the House leaders; so it therefore has to come to this committee. I think that is what I said. Is that clear for everybody else?

Mrs McLeod: Are there periods of time that are stipulated, in terms of notification to the ministries that will be asked to prepare estimates?

The Chair: The short answer is yes, but we have pierced all of the time frames, as Franco indicated earlier. We are prevailing upon the House leaders that, given the attention that the Provincial Auditor referenced, in terms of the estimates process, only one ministry was down. I think we have been signalled that there is a willingness to cooperate, even though we would not be conducting estimates during the time frame that, according to the House rules, we would be conducting them.

I think it is fair that the government representative of the subcommittee would like some additional time to talk to her House leader with respect to those ministries, if there are any, that could not make themselves available during a specific period. But I would imagine that ministries would be notified as a result of our motion, which would not only go to House leaders but then would be presented as a motion on the floor of the Legislature to approve our sitting in 1991 to do supplementary estimates of certain ministries. They would get their notice and it would then be up to the House leaders to order up which specific weeks would be assigned to us as our committee hearing time for estimates, whether it be in January, February or March. But the specific opportunity for notice will be, first, informally through the government representative; second, through the motion on the floor, and then, third, when it appears in the Legislature. Is that clear?

Mr Daigeler: I just would like to refresh your memory that the report of the subcommittee on committee business, when presented to the committees, is deemed to be adopted; there is no motion for the adoption of the report. So when we report tomorrow, I guess we will have to have some agreement.

The Chair: We will have a motion.

Mr Daigeler: It can be changed, but only with the unanimous consent of the committee.

The Chair: Okay. Are there any further questions with respect to what we are going to be doing tomorrow? We are going to be considering a budget. We are going to be considering the report of the subcommittee. Is there any other business that members would like to raise, either today or at tomorrow's meeting?

Mr Perruzza: Along with that, is there some kind of schedule prepared on sittings, the durations for the meetings and so on? A calendar, I guess, is what I am looking for. I do not know about the other members, but I am new at this and I am not quite sure, having glanced at this information, of the terms of reference of this particular committee. I mean, what is and what is not within our purview? We are going to need some time to consider that, in my view, before we develop, I guess, a batting order of business and the ministries that we are going to be looking at, or is that just simply going to be dictated to us by the respective House leaders, the government House leader? I do not know.

1610

The Chair: Mr Perruzza has asked a question about process and perhaps Franco would like to respond first.

Clerk of the Committee: Basically, all of the regulations are in the standing orders. Standing orders 54 to 64 specifically give us our reference mandate. Basically, that deals with how to choose the ministry or offices, the order in which to proceed, the number of hours. If you choose one ministry, it is 15 hours; if you choose an office, two offices or one ministry, the time is divided.

The matter of meeting is the committee's recommendation to the House leaders. If you wish to meet a specific time in February, the committee could move a motion and specifically say the second week of February to the fourth and that motion will go the House leaders for their approval. The committee has specific duties that it can perform, specific ideas it could put forth.

Mr Daigeler: In terms of what questions you can ask, you can ask any questions, unless perhaps your minister is going to have some questions about it.

Mr Hansen: Am I correct that the subcommittee will be picking the times of sitting etc, which are then agreed upon by the global committee? So all the recommendations will be coming back to the subcommittee?

The Chair: That is correct.

Mr Hansen: So we will not be sitting down as a total group and deciding when we are sitting?

The Chair: We will not decide when we are sitting. First of all, we are requesting to sit outside our normal time as set out in our standing orders, so we are sort of

breaking new territory here. We will prevail upon the House leaders to give us that direction quickly so that the ministries can be notified and so that we can prepare.

For opposition members, their critics may be brought in to the committee environment. There may be some briefing support for you and that is a matter you will take up with your House leader or your whip, to have one of the veteran members attend a brief meeting with you to demystify the process a little for you. If your own House leader is not able to do that, I would be willing, as Chairman, to sit down with you and go over the procedures. Franco will advise you of the specific days in Hansard if you wish to do a little Hansard reading. For any of our prior estimates, reading Hansard, just briefly, will give you a flavour for how Hansard operates. So there are a couple of options for your consideration, both yours and Mr Perruzza's question.

Mr Hansen: As I come here, I only have two sheets of paper, which do not tell me very much. So I have been understanding, here and there, that it will be coming.

Mrs McLeod: It may be worth just clarifying the fiscal year with which we deal in the estimates of the ministries.

The Chair: We are dealing with 1990-91. We will probably be looking at supplementary estimates for several ministries since they cease to be spending money on 31 March 1991. Then we will reconvene when the House reconvenes, whether that is in March or April, and begin consideration of the 1991-92 estimates and the rotations and the selections as set out in our standing orders.

Mrs McLeod: Is it reasonable to assume then that, should ministries that were previously identified as presenting estimates be again asked to present estimates in an intersessional period, those estimates would have been prepared and therefore we might be able to have access to the estimates books? I do not know whether or not there are strict rules of procedure that would prohibit it, but I would find it very helpful to members of the committee to be able to have the estimates books over the Christmas holiday, if that is possible and agreeable to members of the committee.

The Chair: Franco, would you like to clarify this?

Clerk of the Committee: Mrs McLeod, the Legislature received the supplementary estimates 8 November. I have copies of those supplementary estimates. As soon as the members decide on dates, I will send them to your offices for you to peruse.

Mrs McLeod: Could we see the original estimates books as well as the supplementary estimates?

The Chair: They can be made available. As regards the first part of your question, about ones previously selected, we are not bound by previous selections. We can do the same one that was done previously, quite frankly. There might be some complaints about it.

Mrs McLeod: And still have the books submitted to us at a later date?

The Chair: Yes, because there are supplementary estimates for a ministry that had its estimates reviewed but

not its supplementary estimates. Supplementary estimates are simply a late-in-the-year adjustment of the budget figures and a third-quarter-indicator analysis in published form.

Ms Haslam: If I am not mistaken, you are saying that since these ministries were already informed and would have already had some of their estimates put in order, it would be interesting or wise to go along with this particular list until March because these are the ones that are available.

Mrs McLeod: Actually, I think all the ministries would have had to prepare estimates.

The Chair: I was just going to clarify that.

Ms Haslam: I am sorry.

The Chair: The fact is that all ministries are required under the standing orders to prepare their estimates, so they are all submitted to every caucus so that they can be distributed to their critics and to the members. They are currently available in the caucus offices.

Mrs McLeod: I was forgetting the—

The Chair: Yes. You will have to bear with the former minister, who has never participated in estimates, other than from this position. It is a uniquely different position.

Mrs McLeod: It certainly is.

The Chair: So all ministries have estimates books, all ministries have supplementary estimates, and therefore we can look at any of them.

Ms Haslam: Okay. That is what I wanted to know.

The Chair: Consider any of them, sorry. You look at all of them.

Ms Haslam: We are not bound by this particular list.

The Chair: No, not at all.

Mr Daigeler: Just one final question. You kept repeating that it would be unusual for us to sit outside the timing

of the House. I was looking at the standing orders for the committee and I cannot find that anywhere. I do not think we are restricted to sitting—

Clerk of the Committee: We are restricted in the manner that the House passed a motion two weeks ago permitting us to meet on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon when the House is in session. When we are not in session, we can make representation to all three House leaders requesting specific time.

Mr Daigeler: So this just refers to that particular motion that was passed two weeks ago.

Clerk of the Committee: That is correct. That is why we meet on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon.

The Chair: Precedent has been that we have sat only when the House was sitting, for purposes of estimates.

Clerk of the Committee: That is correct.

The Chair: That is what Mr Daigeler was asking be clarified, that unlike other committees that sit when the House is not sitting, that is a custom and it is approved by the House leaders and by the Legislature.

Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

The Chair: But the custom is that, in estimates, we sit while the House is sitting.

Clerk of the Committee: That is right.

The Chair: We are moving outside of that precedent in order to meet in January, February and March, should the government not wish to reconvene the House, which is fair to say as well.

Final call. Is there any other business or questions before tomorrow? Are there any items people would like added to tomorrow's agenda? If not, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1619.

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CADON
XC26
-E97



E-6 1990

E-6 1990

ISSN 1181-6465

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 35th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 35^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 5 December 1990

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mercredi 5 décembre 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Organization

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Organisation



Chair: Cameron Jackson
Clerk: Franco Carrozza

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Don Cameron

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario
Éditeur des débats : Don Cameron

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 5 December 1990

The committee met at 1533 in room 2.

ORGANIZATION

The Chair: I see a quorum. We will deal with the report of the subcommittee first. For those of you who are reading it, I will briefly highlight that in accordance with standing order 57, the rotation selection produced the official opposition's choices as Ministry of Energy, seven hours, and Ministry of Community and Social Services, eight hours. The Progressive Conservative Party has the Ministry of Treasury and Economics, seven hours, and the Ministry of the Environment, eight hours.

The governing party has submitted the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, which is specifically votes 2901 and 2903. The reason it is presented in the report as Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is that the legal name of this ministry has not been changed and that is the legal name of the ministry. So it is before you as its legal name, which has to be reported in the House. However, it is the understood intention, which Hansard is now recording, that the governing party wishes to do the estimates of that portion of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines devoted to mines, and the Minister of Mines specifically. The government party has not submitted its other one, and wishes to hold open the option, but I will let it speak directly to that in a moment.

Perhaps we will deal with that issue first and then proceed to the meeting times and dates that are being recommended to the committee. Are there any questions on this portion of the subcommittee report?

Hearing none, then we will proceed to page 2, which sets out the recommendation from the subcommittee to meet in the three weeks commencing 4 February. The second week would be 11 February and the third week would be 18 February. The committee would meet on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 10 to 12 and from 2 until 5. This is considered somewhat normal procedure in terms of past practice for this and most other committees. Are there any questions on the recommended dates and times?

Ms M. Ward: I do have a question regarding the times. Has any consideration been given to other committee commitments that members of this committee may have?

The Chair: The House leaders will determine the scheduling of committees generally. Your whip—at least that is the practice in our party—I presume will look at substitution for two reasons. First, there may be specialized interests. For example, the parliamentary assistant to your Minister of Energy may wish to be substituted to your committee to participate in those estimates. That of course applies to any other committees that might be meeting at the same time the estimates committee is meeting.

Your whip would deal with substitutions. So we generally try not to address that, but would be more sensitive to the attendance of the committee as we now are constituted. Does that answer your question?

Ms M. Ward: Not entirely, if you are saying that the whips will work this out. I am also on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs and I had the understanding that was to meet Thursdays. That was specifically why I was asking the question. I see you have Thursday—

The Chair: All right. This is a schedule to meet in February when the presumption is that the House is not sitting, so your regular committee time frames are not necessarily operating and it would be strictly full-day sessions that are booked by agreement among the three House leaders. That schedule is provided to you before we rise at the end of December. Any other questions on the timing?

There has been a request that we not necessarily approve this report today, to hold out the option of completing the final ministry selection for the governing party. That has been suggested to me as Chair and I am therefore sharing it with the rest of the committee. I am at your pleasure, but we can wait until Tuesday and approve certain matters. Perhaps then, by Tuesday, the House leaders will have met and we will have a resolution authorizing us to meet outside of our mandate, in February.

Mr Daigeler: Would that require another meeting of the committee?

The Chair: Yes, it would.

Mr Daigeler: Can we not just leave it open with a proviso that as with the two opposition parties, the government party will fill in the other ministry it wishes to choose? I do not really see the need for another meeting just for this particular purpose.

Clerk of the Committee: Mr Daigeler, we do not have the estimates before us. We must wait for the Legislature to send the estimates to this committee—this is merely background information—and directions among the committee to the House leaders. But before we proceed with this, we must have the estimates before us.

1540

Mr Daigeler: Supplementary estimates.

Clerk of the Committee: Supplementary estimates.

The Chair: We have been given the estimates, but the supplementary estimates were—

Mr Daigeler: I do not quite see how that clarification, though, answers my question. In order to present the thing to the House leaders, why do we have to meet again? Can we not just say, "You go choose the ministry that you will choose"?

The Chair: Yes, that is one suggestion, but your question also asked us why we needed to meet. Our clerk is advising us that we do not have any work before us. The standing orders say that our work is deemed to have been completed because we are this late in the year.

Mr Daigeler: I just want to avoid—

The Chair: I am with you on that point. I am trying to clarify for all members the awkwardness of the situation we are in in terms of not putting the cart before the horse. I share with you the desire not to have a meeting if it is not necessary. I think we all agree on that, but I am guided by the clerk who suggests that we should meet briefly to approve the final report next Tuesday. We are led to believe that by then the House leaders will have prepared the appropriate motion which refers the supplementary estimates to us. That is what the clerk is guiding us to. I might share a different view, but I am guided by the clerk or the committee; I am actually guided by the committee, so tell me what you would like to do.

Mr Daigeler: What impact would that have on us?

Clerk of the Committee: You cannot very well work on something that is not before you.

Mr Daigeler: Next Tuesday, other than formalizing that second ministry, what else would we be doing?

Clerk of the Committee: You will receive the motion in the Legislature giving you the mandate to review.

Mr Daigeler: To look at those.

Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

Mr Daigeler: That would be it?

Clerk of the Committee: Yes.

The Chair: I then ask the question, could we then make this as a condition subsequent to receiving that order?

Clerk of the Committee: If that is what you wish.

The Chair: Then that would avoid the meeting. Our motion would read, "Should the House refer to us the supplementary estimates by order prior to a certain date, we wish to submit the following:"

Mr Daigeler: I think that makes sense.

Ms Haslam: Certainly, with the proviso, with the understanding that the second one can be added at that time, the second government party ministry could be added in at that time.

The Chair: When you give us your final submission, it has to be as soon as we have the matter referred to us so that we can then turn to the government and get it on. I have shared with members my concern if all committees start to approach the House leaders simultaneously with requests for time. I understand that certain committees were not anticipating meeting during the break. I would hate to see estimates suffer in that sweepstakes. That is a part of the process that goes on in this building and it is not a problem of any governing party; it is a problem of process with 12 committees competing to use up a very limited amount of time. So I feel the committee should be aware that if you are serious about doing estimates, we should be serious and get our request in early to enhance

its chances so that we can meet and do our work on estimates.

Ms Haslam: In other words, Franco, our request cannot go in until they tell us we have business to do anyway. Is that correct?

Clerk of the Committee: That is correct.

Ms Haslam: You were anticipating, Mr Chairman—

The Chair: The House leaders meet tomorrow, so that will be their first opportunity. If they do not resolve it tomorrow, then we have to wait until the following Thursday. I know they will be discussing several committees that have now, out of the blue, come up with 12-hour requests. That is pretty apparent.

All right. To accommodate the governing party, I think we just simply have to indicate that your final submission will be added as quickly as possible. Okay?

Ms Haslam: Sure.

The Chair: Then we may not have to necessarily meet. If that is the case, we will require a motion to that effect. Are you going to work on the appropriate wording?

Clerk of the Committee: Yes, I will.

The Chair: Thank you. Hansard has recorded that. I need a second.

Ms Haslam: I will second that.

The Chair: All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Carried.

The second item before us is the budget. If you will look not at your agenda but at the cover of the budget, the cover of the budget references that this is an interim or supplementary budget for the 1990-91 activity period, or to be more specific for the period of 4 December 1990 to 31 March 1991. We felt this was the simplest way to deal with our budget since our budget requests are not on a calendar year; they are on the same financial year as the ministries that we are doing the estimates for. With that understanding, Franco would be pleased to comment briefly on the budget and then we will answer any questions.

Clerk of the Committee: The items on page 2 deal specifically with the meeting per diem that the members will be entitled to claim when they meet and also the travelling per diems, which are eight days. Since we are meeting on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, you are entitled to claim the Monday as a travelling day and the Friday as a travelling day. Also, there are your meal allowances that you can legally claim for every day you are here, and also for travel. The travel includes, for instance, if a member is from a northern riding and he has to travel to meet here in Toronto; the committee will pay for the travel so he does not have to include it in his yearly travel. That includes members who travel by car. They are entitled to the kilometres. Also, if a member is not from Toronto and wishes to stay the night, the committee will provide for that.

"Printing—Miscellaneous" deals with the budgets, the exhibits that you will be receiving, Xeroxing in particular. "Binding": At the end of the year we bind the material business of the committee and some of the Hansards that are not bound by the Queen's Printer. "Books, Maps and

Publications": Should you require material to help you in your review of the estimates, the committee provides for that.

"Catering" is simply the juice that you see today and coffee and tea for the meeting days. "Postage" is self-explanatory, the same as long distance. "Transportation of Goods": In the past on special occasions we have sent couriers with material to members if they were out of town or if they required specific material. Then we utilize that. "Miscellaneous" expenses is self-explanatory.

The Chair: Any questions on the supplementary budget for the committee?

Mr Hansen: I have one question on transportation. Four weeks at \$1,000 per week: If we have a northern member here, there is no way we would get away with a budget of \$4,000 for all of us. My cost would be \$78 per week. Now if you have a northern member—I do not know if we have anybody—it would be close to \$600 per week, which would be \$2,400 in the budget right off the bat. I guess maybe you have already looked at the location of everyone here.

Clerk of the Committee: That is included too, although some members might not specifically come on the same day, so it is kind of hard to tell, because if they come on a Monday they are entitled to the travelling day, but not if they come on Tuesday when the committee is meeting. So even though they may travel—

Mr Hansen: I am talking about "Travel-Transportation."

The Chair: You are talking about his air fare.

Clerk of the Committee: I understand that, but you might not be entitled under this account; you might be entitled under your own account.

1550

Mr Hansen: One of your 52 trips.

The Chair: But to answer your question directly, this budget was not prepared with the understanding of where all the members were coming from. These are mean averages and they generally work out. This is a guide. We cannot proceed unless we have a budget approved. There is some flexibility within this rather generous amount.

Mr Hansen: So some of us could take our 52 trips up here to Queen's Park.

The Chair: They are not counted against your committee time. They are a separate item.

Mr Hansen: Okay, fine.

Mr Daigeler: But if we have an overcharge, the Legislature would still pay for it even if there is no money in the budget.

Mr Hansen: I just asked the question. I have known of deficit financing before too.

Clerk of the Committee: The important point here is that the Legislature pays for all of the expenses for members that are required for the members to be present in Toronto for the work.

Mr Daigeler: And it is not counted towards your office expenditures.

The Chair: Any further questions with respect to the budget?

Mr Perruzza: I do not understand the travel per diem, the eight days. What if you are a Metropolitan Toronto member? I do not understand.

Clerk of the Committee: You are only entitled to claim your kilometre mileage. Unfortunately, it works out that the Toronto members or the members around the area of Toronto are usually not entitled to the travelling per diem, only the kilometres. For instance, if you live up in North York you are entitled to 20 kilometres' pay and not the travelling days, not the \$78.

Mr Daigeler: You are entitled to the per diem for the committee work.

The Chair: Let me just try to explain it in this way: The difference between a meeting per diem and a travel per diem is that in a given week Monday is deemed a travel day, so if you are from Windsor or from Sault Ste Marie you are travelling on a Monday. You get paid to travel on that Monday. When you arrive that evening, you will do some of your work to justify the travel per diem and then you will stay overnight and in the morning you will appear before committee and you will be paid a meeting per diem. They are two different amounts.

But if you live 20 miles from this building, it is hard to justify that you need a day to travel to get here. We have confused you about the difference between a travel per diem and a meeting per diem. You cannot be working in your constituency, but you are doing committee work in the process of travelling to get here.

Mr Perruzza: Okay. So for the people on this committee who are from Metro, if you have 11 members here times \$78, you are going to have some moneys that go in your budget which are not going to be claimed.

The Chair: Possibly.

Clerk of the Committee: You might be substituted too.

The Chair: But you may find that this committee may wish to travel to Washington to examine how they conduct the estimates review in the capital, or a state Legislature. You would need to travel on a Sunday in order to be there for a Monday meeting. You would get a travel per diem. Or if you were on another committee that was conducting public hearings in North Bay, you would travel the day before. This is a committee that does not traditionally travel unless it is examining estimates processes in other jurisdictions.

Mr Hansen: I have another question. I come from Niagara and I usually leave the night before because at 10 o'clock in the morning it would be pretty well impossible. Is that day before just a convenience to me?

The Chair: As the Chair, I will be pleased to talk to you, as will Franco, on an individual basis and to give you counsel in that area. We would be more than pleased to. But in the interests of committee time, perhaps if there are any questions about the quantum of the budget or any particular amounts—hearing none, I would entertain a motion.

Mr McGuinty: One brief point: How are these per diems treated by Revenue Canada? Are those tax-free?

The Chair: Three years ago they were a lump sum payment, and in the last two years the Legislative Assembly's finance branch has put them on a form with separate entries. I guess the simplest way of putting it is that they are now accounting for them in such a way that should the government wish to treat it as a taxable item, they have a system in place to do that. My understanding is that it is currently not taxable. That is as clear a description of what is going on as you are going to get. Do you understand what I am saying? Okay.

Franco and I are prepared to sit down with you when you get your first form and explain it to you, but you will see a very clear distinction between certain items so that they can monitor this.

Mr Carr: I wonder if I could move a motion to approve the budget.

The Chair: That would be delightful. Could I have a second? Ms Haslam. All those in favour? Opposed, if any? Great.

Are there any other items of business members wish to raise?

I just want to take three minutes, if I can, with your indulgence, to introduce you to Elaine Campbell. She is someone who is new to the head table. She is with legislative research. It is customary for all committees of the Legislature to have the support of legislative research, as well as of legislative counsel, so that we have legal support should we require it.

It will not be uncommon for us to have legislative research here and since Elaine has come today, with your indulgence, she will take maybe two minutes to briefly explain what she has done for the committee in the past so that you are familiar with her role and the degree to which she can support the committee in the estimates process.

Ms Campbell: Prior to the formation of the standing committee on estimates last year, the legislative research service had prepared on a very regular basis information packages for each member who requested them when participating in the ministry estimates debates. We continue to provide that service. These packages were made to order and we followed the directions received from the individual members.

We would cover things such as the questions asked in the House, statements made by the minister, initiatives, issues over the past fiscal year and quite often comparisons on the budgets for the current fiscal year and the previous fiscal year.

Last year I was asked to attend the first subcommittee meeting of the estimates committee and at that time research needs were discussed. It was decided that there was at that time no need to have someone here on a regular basis. They wanted it to be known that individual members could contact our service if they required information for their particular participation in the debates.

I was asked to return to the committee at the final meeting it had after its report was tabled last November. At that time I was asked by the chairman of the committee to prepare a memorandum that would discuss the role of legislative research in the committee's proceedings. The memorandum was presented to the members of the committee at their first meeting last spring. I had divided the proposal into two parts. The first dealt with background materials that could be prepared for use before or when the committee met in the new year. The second listed ways in which the LRS could support the committee on a more regular basis.

It was decided at the meeting in the spring that the background materials I had suggested could be prepared should be prepared. Due to time constraints and the few meetings that were held by the committee during the months of May and June, only one of the papers that I had been asked to prepare was actually distributed to the entire committee, and that was a summary of recommendations for estimates reform in Ontario that had been made over the last 10 years.

We were also prepared to and did prepare overviews of estimates committee activities in other parliamentary jurisdictions, as well as a sample ministry estimates review package. That was the extent of my involvement in last year's committee.

Mr Daigeler: Would it be possible to get copies of these documents? I think they would be very useful.

The Chair: They are and we will have Franco send those out to each of you. I read the documents. They are very helpful. I want to thank legislative research for its brief presentation. If there is no other business, I know Tony has a very important motion to adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1600.

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 29 May 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Organization

Estimates,
Ministry of Natural Resources

Chair: George R. McCague
Clerk: Harold Brown

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 34^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mardi 29 mai 1990

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Organisation

Budget des dépenses,
ministère des Richesses
naturelles, 1990-91

Président : George R. McCague
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 29 May 1990

The committee met at 1530 in committee room 2.

ORGANIZATION

The Chair: We have a couple of matters I want to dispose of. One is the budget. I was afraid we were not going to get coffee today until we passed this budget, but we did.

Miss Roberts: I have a motion.

The Chair: Miss Roberts moves that the 1990-91 budget in the amount of \$4,300 be adopted and that the Chair be authorized to present it to the Board of Internal Economy.

Motion agreed to.

The Chair: I hope the ministries as they come will notice the barebones budget that we have and what we intend to do with all the ones that we look at in the next two or three months. You are well aware of that, Madam Minister.

ESTIMATES, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES, 1990-91

On vote 2801, ministry administration program:

The Chair: We are considering the estimates of the Ministry of Natural Resources for a total of 7.5 hours. We will meet today, tomorrow and a week from today. Members will recall that the minister is allowed a 30-minute opening statement, followed by the opposition for 30 minutes, the third party for 30 minutes and then the minister for 30 additional minutes to retaliate, rebut, say something more or whatever she chooses.

Mr Wildman: Surely not to retaliate.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I could not possibly do that.

The Chair: If I did not know you so well, Mr Wildman, I might agree with you. We will start with the minister for a 30-minute opening statement.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Members of the standing committee on estimates, I am pleased to present to you the estimates of the Ministry of Natural Resources for the fiscal year 1990-91. As we enter the 1990s, wise management of our natural resources is critical. The decisions we make today will help determine whether future generations of Ontario residents will be able to enjoy the same opportunities to use the province's resources as we do.

We are entering a new era of resource management, one in which there are many different views and values. There is an increased concern about issues such as the health of the environment, the long-term viability of our forest industry and the state of our forest and aquatic ecosystems.

Because of this concern, people want to be more involved in decision-making about how we use our natural resources. One of my main responsibilities as minister is building a consensus that can bridge these many diverse views and concerns. Through consensus we can improve resource management to better serve the needs of all Ontarians both today and in the future.

I am proud of the breadth and depth of what the Ministry of Natural Resources has accomplished over the past fiscal year. For example: last year 162 million trees were planted in Ontario; MNR and the conservation authorities financed 211 capital works projects, including 41 flood control projects and 18 erosion control projects; through ministry programs and an agreement with Wildlife Habitat Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada, close to 400 acres of wetlands were acquired; more than 800 digital maps were produced under contracts with the Ontario mapping industry; nearly 14 million fish of a dozen different species were stocked in 1,300 lakes, rivers and streams in Ontario, and 153 projects were undertaken to rehabilitate fish habitat; 7.8 million people visited Ontario's provincial parks and 44 new parks were brought into regulation under the Provincial Parks Act; almost 5,000 teenagers and young adults participated in resource-oriented youth programs such as the Environmental Youth Corps and the Ontario Rangers, and MNR's public information centre in Toronto responded to more than 200,000 inquiries for information from all over the world.

Before describing specific programs and policy initiatives within the ministry, I would briefly like to outline our blueprint for resource management, which is based on the principle of sustainable development and supported by the concepts of partnership, valuing of resources and information and knowledge.

I am convinced most Ontarians support the principle of sustainable development, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Our actions today should not impair the future of our children or our children's children. In our decision-making processes, the ministry will give full consideration to the wide range of environmental, social and economic demands and values placed on Ontario's resources. The ministry is fully committed to making this principle a reality in all our resource management policies and practices.

To support sustainable development we will need to develop more partnerships and expand our existing ones. Partnerships are not new to MNR. Several, such as the community wildlife and fisheries involvement programs, the forest management agreements and the conservation authorities have successfully benefited the parties involved, the resources and the public.

The ministry is eager to develop a wider range of partnership arrangements, particularly those that will involve others in shared planning responsibilities. The aim will be to involve key user groups, agencies and communities more fully in the decisions that affect them.

Another concept that can assist the ministry in planning the management of natural resources is that of valuing resources. Establishing a value for resources, based on the full range of benefits they provide, enables us to set priorities for land and resource use, encourage the efficient allocation and use of our resources to protect those in limited supply and reflect the real cost of protecting and renewing the resource.

Finally, I believe that the generation of data, information and knowledge about natural resources beyond what we have now is of fundamental importance in effective resource

management. The integrated database we are building will draw on data from a variety of our disciplines and from non-ministry sources. It will be developed through partnerships with the other industrial and recreational resource users.

I would now like to outline a number of key steps that the ministry has undertaken to build a foundation for the future in the management of our forest resources.

The Class Environmental Assessment on Timber Management Activities in Ontario has been under way since May 1988. It is one of the most extensive examinations of timber management ever carried out in Canada.

MNR, as the proponent, was the first group to present its evidence and ministry experts gave the Environmental Assessment Board a thorough presentation on timber management in Ontario, including more than 60 recommended terms and conditions of approval.

Other parties at the hearing are now presenting evidence, including their own recommended terms and conditions. Negotiations have been taking place in an effort to reach agreement on some issues in order to narrow the scope of the hearing.

It will be at least another year before the board makes a decision. However, the hearing has already begun to provide important new thinking on forestry practices. Our ministry's proposals offer ideas for significant improvements in timber management in Ontario.

The ministry's commitment to sustainable development is clearly reflected in the methods we are using to improve the health of forest ecosystems. We are focusing on a number of areas in co-operative management, research and development.

For example, we are looking to include in our forest management planning process appropriate measures to reduce the impact of those agents that apply stress on our forests, such as airborne pollutants and insects, and potential long-term climate change.

1540

Let me turn briefly to timber production. The future direction for timber production in Ontario will be set in a new timber production policy. The policy will identify the quantities and types of forest products we are striving to produce for industrial purposes on both crown and private land in Ontario. It will include predictions of potential supply and demand and the level of investment required to fill the demand. It will also outline broad strategies for ensuring our forest management efforts are sustainable.

We are currently assembling the data required and will be carrying out extensive computer modelling over the next year. The policy will be developed through an open and consultative process involving stakeholder groups and the general public.

I think the committee members would agree that the need to recognize the range of natural resource values recognized by Ontarians is no more evident than in the Temagami area. Heightened concerns on all sides of the issues have become focused and have resulted in serious confrontations. While the situation is complex, and I will not review the various viewpoints, I would like to highlight the initiatives the ministry has taken to ensure that the interests of all those concerned are addressed.

Over the past two years the ministry has moved on several fronts in Temagami to increase its ability to manage the resources of the area. We have introduced a comprehensive planning process to ensure that Temagami resources continue to be managed in a manner that protects the special wilderness and

recreational resources of Temagami and also provides long-term social, environmental and economic benefits for this and future generations.

Through changes in the provincial parks policy, we have greatly increased wilderness protection for Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Provincial Park. We have also created three new waterway parks to add to the recreational resources of the district. In all, about 100,000 hectares are now protected in Temagami area parks.

Through a major increase in forest renewal efforts, the planting of seedlings in Temagami district has risen to 1.6 million in 1989 from 160,000 in 1983, and 2.3 million seedlings are scheduled to be planted in 1990.

On 23 April, the government announced it was approving crown timber licences which will provide a timber supply to nine mills from 1990 to 1992. We have ensured that there will be no clear-cutting of old red or white pine stands in the area.

At the same time we signed an agreement with the Temagami Anishnabai which provides for joint stewardship of the four district townships of Delhi, Acadia, Shelburne and Canton. This historic agreement is the first of its kind in North America.

We have already created a local citizens' advisory board, the Temagami Advisory Council, to provide advice on matters raised by the public, interest groups, the provincial government or council members relating to land use and resource management in Temagami district.

There is more that we must do in Temagami in the interests of continued good management, and I believe the local communities can help us take the right next steps.

As part of our commitment to involving the public in resource management, the ministry has established Trees Ontario, a non-profit foundation set up in co-operation with the Ontario Forestry Association. Trees Ontario will help corporations, groups and individuals who want to improve the province's natural environment by planting trees. Our current hope is to reach an annual planting of five million new trees in the near future.

I would like to mention briefly the 1989 fire season in Ontario. Our forest protection efforts this past season were successful in terms of controlling forest fires in the province and minimizing losses.

There were approximately 2,400 fires in 1989—700 more than the 10-year average of 1,700, but well below 1988's total of 3,200. More important, losses were kept to less than 10,000 hectares within the intensive protection zone, the areas of the province targeted for aggressive attack of forest fires.

The ministry also worked closely with band councils and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in safely evacuating residents from a number of northern Ontario reserves threatened by fires outside the intensive protection zone.

At the end of 1989 I received the review of our fire crew system from our aviation and fire management program, as well as a health and safety review jointly undertaken by MNR fire management and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. We are acting on all 16 recommendations from these two program reviews, including establishing a system that allows a flexible mix of three- and four-member crews.

The excellence of our aviation and fire management program was illustrated during the recent fire in Hagersville where MNR firefighters and their municipal colleagues drew international media interest and coverage when they doused the blaze only 17 days after it had started.

Let me turn now to the ministry's efforts in natural heritage protection and outdoor recreation. In March, I announced the ministry's intention to form an advisory committee, in partnership with other government agencies and private organizations, to plan the management of the first phase of the 10,500-acre Rouge River Valley Park.

The Rouge area is a unique combination of outstanding features, including rare plant and animal species living in a variety of natural habitats as well as historic buildings and archaeological sites. When it is completed, the Rouge park will be the largest urban park in Canada.

The ministry moved to expand public involvement and participation in wildlife management through the creation last summer of a wildlife working group to make recommendations on a comprehensive wildlife strategy for Ontario.

Chaired by Dr David Fowle, professor emeritus of biology and environmental studies at York University, the group represents a broad cross-section of expertise, opinion and interest in Ontario's wildlife resources. The group has held workshops to identify the issues relating to wildlife management in Ontario and will prepare a recommended wildlife strategy by the end of this year.

The ministry has also achieved some major technological breakthroughs in another aspect of wildlife management, the control of wildlife rabies. Our first experimental rabies program gained the ministry an international reputation for its research.

In 1989, cabinet approved our second experimental program, a five-year plan focusing on three main areas: urban rabies control in skunks and foxes, rabies control in rural areas and development of an oral vaccine which is effective in both skunks and foxes.

Mr Wildman: Does it work on members?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I will not read my smart response into Hansard.

Research in all three areas shows promise. In 1989 a trial immunization program for skunks in Scarborough reduced the incidence of rabies in the control area to near zero. Previously, it had been the highest in Metropolitan Toronto.

The public is also playing a vital role in the development of a new draft strategic plan for Ontario fisheries. Twenty-five public and private sector organizations were involved in developing the draft plan, and more than 50 public agencies and private organizations are now participating in a review of proposed tactics for implementing the plan.

The proposed goal for Ontario fisheries management is to have healthy aquatic ecosystems that provide sustainable benefits to satisfy in part society's present and future requirements for a high-quality environment, wholesome food, employment and income and recreational activity.

Let me briefly discuss the zebra mussel, which is a small, striped mollusc that is spreading rapidly in the Great Lakes. Zebra mussels pose a serious threat to Ontario's fisheries and other water users and they present us with a complex problem that may be difficult to solve.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has undertaken several measures in response to the zebra mussel problem. MPP Jack Riddell, my parliamentary assistant, is heading an inter-ministerial committee to deal with a wide range of issues concerning zebra mussels. Last month, we distributed a public guideline designed to slow the spread of mussels. We are also embarking on a campaign to tell municipalities, anglers, cottagers and boaters about the problems zebra mussels will cause and how best to deal with them.

Public consultation has also been a vital element in drafting a wetlands planning policy statement by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

The statement reflects the Ontario government's strong commitment to the protection of wetlands. It will require municipalities and public agencies to have regard for wetland areas when making land use planning decisions. This will help ensure that greater value is placed on our remaining wetlands, which play a significant role in water purification, flood control and fish and wildlife habitat.

The ministry has also been working actively to secure wetlands. To date, the ministry has ensured the protection of 80,000 hectares of class 1 and 2 wetlands in official plans and has assisted in the purchase of more than 7,000 hectares of wetlands.

I would now like to highlight the ministry's work in the management of lands and waters. Members of the committee are aware that the report on the outstanding issues of the review of the conservation authorities program was completed in 1989.

The reforms focus on four areas: a move to a core and non-core mandate to clarify responsibility for program delivery; the amalgamation of authorities to enable them to deliver more efficiently their mandate; membership reductions to enhance responsiveness and accountability, and rationalization of funding arrangements.

I am now in the process of appointing an implementation steering group to assist us as we proceed with the program changes. I also intend to appoint a broadly based liaison committee to encourage ongoing discussions among the partners both during and after the implementation of the reforms.

Our capacity to promote sustainable development and to monitor and respond to changing environmental conditions will be greatly strengthened through the Canadian radar-sensing satellite, Radarsat, scheduled for launch in 1994.

Radar sensors can provide information in all weather conditions. One of the major benefits to this ministry will be in forestry. Mapping and monitoring of areas of harvest regeneration, disease and fire loss in the forest will be rapid and cost-effective.

1550

We are already using remote sensing technology as a source of raw data for a provincial geographic information systems program, another area where MNR has achieved great successes with new technology. The basis for the GIS is the ministry's computerized base mapping program.

The ministry is developing this information system by contracting out the actual computerized mapping work to Ontario's mapping industry. This has helped to expand the highly technical computerized mapping industry here in Ontario, and Ontario companies are now competing worldwide in this field.

Members of the committee know that Ontario's new Aggregate Resources Act was proclaimed 1 January 1990. The act is viewed as one of the most advanced pieces of legislation controlling the use of aggregate resources in any jurisdiction.

The consensus-building used in developing the act resulted in legislation that creates the necessary balance between the need for aggregates in industry and society and the need for environmental protection. The act improves our ability to achieve appropriate management and progressive rehabilitation of pits and quarries on both private and crown land.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is strongly committed to educating our young people on resource management issues. In 1989, we launched Focus on Forests, a comprehensive forest

education program prepared by a group of Ontario teachers in co-operation with the ministry and with Forestry Canada. Focus on Forests was developed specifically to help teachers incorporate forestry education into their existing curriculum. Focus on Forests joins the ministry's two existing education programs, Project WILD and the youth fisheries education program.

These remarks have outlined several highlights of our resource management program. I have particularly emphasized new developments in public involvement because I consider these to be significant indicators of an important future direction. There are obviously many, many more programs that I could discuss, and I would be pleased to speak about any of those with committee members as we proceed through these estimates.

In closing, let me emphasize that throughout all our programs, priorities and policies, the ministry's main goal is to work in partnership with the people of Ontario to ensure that our natural resources benefit our citizens today as well as future generations of Ontarians.

The Chair: We now have the comments of the official opposition.

Mr Wildman: First let me say that I want to thank the committee for its consideration and the minister for her agreement with regard to the scheduling of these estimates. I also appreciate the fact that, for the benefit of the opposition critics, the timing was changed because of the delay in the distribution of the estimates briefing books.

I want to congratulate the minister on her first presentation of estimates. I look forward to the exchange that we will have. I must also say that it is a credit to the committee, the regulations and rules that the committee operates under, and quite refreshing that we have a 10-page leadoff by the minister, particularly after the last one we had to endure from the previous minister, which I think ran to something like 299 pages.

It is also refreshing, considering the commitment the minister says the ministry has to sustainable development, that both sides of the page have been used for the pages that have been distributed. As I recall, that 299-page opus had some pages with very little typing on them and only one side was used, and it was not recycled paper. There was certainly not any indication that there was any commitment to a greening of Ontario on the part of your predecessor.

With regard to the Ministry of Natural Resources programs, as a northern member and as a person who has been intimately involved with Natural Resources estimates and with issues of resource management for some time, I recognize that the role of this ministry is not an easy one. It is not just not an easy one because opposition critics such as myself try to ensure that it is not one, but rather it is a difficult political one. Not only are you involved in the administration of resource management programs and the biological issues related to proper resource management as well as geological issues related to resource management, but there are also a lot of political competing interests which are not easy to balance and which often are in conflict with one another.

There are very legitimate demands from many different groups on our natural resources, whether they be demands from loggers for timber, from pulp and paper companies, from mining companies, from aggregate developers, recreationists, ecologists, hunters, fishermen, sportsmen, tourist outfitters—many of whom often come into conflict with one another. The ministry has to balance those. I think it is very important that the minister has indicated her commitment and the ministry's

commitment to sustainable development, but in regard to the competing interests involved that is not an easy task.

Also, I would hope that somewhere during the discussion of these estimates the minister will be able to give us a more extensive definition of what she understands "sustainable development" to mean than is in the briefing books because, since the Brundtland commission made its historic report, this phrase "sustainable development" has come to mean whatever the user wishes it to mean, unfortunately, in my view. It is something that has almost become a motherhood thing, and it is a phrase that is used to mean very different things by environmental activists and the presidents of companies like Abitibi-Price. I am not being critical of either group, but I think it is important that we know exactly what this minister means when she uses the phrase "sustainable development."

I think it is more than important in definition terms because we face the potential of a serious economic threat from Europe. There is the potential that well-meaning Europeans will move from seals and the fur industry to forestry in their activism. The issues related to forest management and global warming have the potential of us facing a boycott or the campaign for a boycott, let's put it that way, of lumber and paper products originating in Canada. While the demands to protect the forest resources in Third World countries like Brazil—an important issue in Amazonia—have centred on putting pressure on the Brazilian government, which in some ways is positive in that environmental groups have suggested ways of alleviating that country's foreign debt burden in exchange for agreements to protect the rain forest, it is unlikely we are going to have activists in Europe suggesting that their governments or the European Community should somehow forgive Canada's foreign debt burden in exchange for agreements to protect our forests.

I suspect it is more likely we are going to face campaigns for boycotts, which could have serious economic effects in this country. So it is important that the public sector and the private sector co-operate to ensure proper forest resource management and the broadcasting of those programs to properly manage the resource.

1600

Unfortunately, there is significant evidence that in the past we have indeed mined our forest resources rather than farmed them. The ministry itself, over the years, has admitted that we have an enormous backlog of unregenerated cutover areas, and frankly the funding that has been made available by this government for regeneration and treating those cutover areas has not made a great dent in the backlog. I will admit that is a backlog of 70 years at least in the making, but it is one that we have to deal with. I will come back to this, but funding has not kept pace with the demands, as I understand it, of the forest management agreements, much less responding to what went before the negotiations of those FMAs.

Obviously we will be dealing at greater length with the Temagami situation. I will say that we welcome the historic agreement with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai for joint management of the four townships. We have indicated that to the minister and to the government. However, there are other aspects of that decision that we question. For instance, since there is to be 50% representation on the one side of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai, I would like to have some further description and explanation of the membership of the other 50% in terms of the split among government, the local communities, the local forestry or logging companies and representation of

labour, because obviously we want to respond to the concerns of the first nation, but we also must respond to the very legitimate concerns of the local communities, the local industry and the local workforce in developing proper management plans in the area.

Also, we are concerned, as the minister said, about the supplying of timber to the nine mills left in the area and determining how much of that area is in fact old growth and how that is to be protected. I would like to deal with that in more detail. Also, I would just be interested, in passing, in finding out what role the provincial industrial restructuring commissioner, Malcolm Rowan, played in the negotiation of this historic agreement, if any.

Obviously, with the changes in the parks policy we are running into a difficult problem in relation to sustainable development. While we must preserve wilderness, and everyone recognizes the need for that, not just in terms of our important heritage but in terms of dealing with global warming and protecting endangered old-growth areas or indeed endangered species of flora and fauna, it is interesting to me, to use a mild term, how we protect wilderness while at the same time ensuring multiple use. I notice the minister has not used that term anywhere in her leadoff remarks. I am very concerned obviously, on the one hand, in dealing with these competing interests, with the question of availability of timber for the industries, particularly in northern Ontario, but half of the workforce related to forestry is located in southern Ontario, so it affects the whole province, but it affects communities more directly in the north. We have to ensure proper end use.

Baskerville, in his study, called for an ongoing external review of the forestry resource in the province to deal with what he called "the mask of rationalization carried on by the ministry in dealing with its figures." That is a very nice, very descriptive term. I would like to know what is being done in terms of external review and implementing that aspect of Baskerville's recommendations.

Dr Rosehart, who is a close friend of both the minister and I, carried out a study on the forest resource inventory and concluded, despite what the minister's predecessor had to say, that it was in chaos. He said that in his view it was being abused by the ministry; it was never intended to be used for operational purposes and that, unfortunately, was one of the main purposes it was used for by the ministry.

He indicated there might up to a 20% difference between what the ministry said was available as part of the inventory and what was actually there. That has important effects on the overall forest management program and what timber should be made available. Dr Rosehart, as I recall, indicated that there should be a threefold increase in the budget for FRI. I searched through the briefing books and have not found that to be the case. I would like to know what the ministry is doing to implement that recommendation. Obviously, we have to have proper information about our resources if we are to properly manage that resource.

The ministry staff, in discussions with me over a number of months, from time to time have used the term "rationalization of mills," particularly in northeastern Ontario. I know they are sincere when they talk about that because they are concerned about how to properly manage the resource and protect the jobs that are dependent on that resource, but rationalization is in fact a euphemism for saying that we have to cut down on the number of mills, that there are too many mills or too many mills of the wrong type in northern Ontario, particularly in the northeast in places like Hearst, Chapeau and Sault Ste Marie area. I

would like to know what the ministry is doing to respond to what I perceive as a way of saying we have too many mills for the amount and kinds of timber that we have available in some areas of the province.

I know the minister has indicated that her ministry is about to proceed or is just proceeding with a private lands forestry review. I want to know what the time frame is for that review, when we can anticipate recommendations and what effect recommendations of that review might have on the management of the crown resource.

I raised in the House yesterday the question of the transfer of a particular mill in a community not in northern Ontario but in southeastern Ontario in my friend's riding in Harcourt, the G. W. Martin mill. It is in John Eakins's riding. I would like to know how it is that a well-established mill, the largest mill of the 14 G. W. Martin mills in this province, would be forced to shut down or to remain shut down and not to be sold because of a study that the government is developing, and why it is that there was not a suggestion that all mills using crown timber, if there is not enough crown timber available in the area, should indeed cut back some so that this mill could reopen and employ people.

I understand that 15 of the families in Harcourt are on unemployment insurance which is about to run out. As I understand it, there is only a total of 52 families in that community. That is devastating for a community and it certainly exemplifies the importance of this ministry in forest resource management for the economy of a community.

The minister mentioned Trees Ontario. We welcomed that when the announcement was made, but I would like to have some further discussion of where the trees are going to be planted under this program. It is welcome to plant trees in urban parks. It is good for the environment and it is good not just for the ecology of the overall province but the social environment, but if that is the kind of tree planting we are mainly talking about it is not going to have a hell of a lot of effect on the industry. It would be nice to plant trees on the Toronto Islands, and I think it would be welcome, but let's plant some in the north too under that program.

1610

I have said before, and Mr Tough, the deputy minister, is familiar with my view, that I think it is very difficult for MNR to continue to try to do more with less. A conjuror can do that but Mr Tough and his colleagues are only competent conjurors so far. I do not know how much more they can do by sleight of hand to ensure that the ministry appears to be doing more when in fact it is budgeting less. How are we regenerating the forests without adequately ensuring that we are adding more to the budget to enable us to cut that backlog? How are we responding to global warming?

I would also be interested, by the way, not just in an administrative way but in the biological argument. We know that there is a controversy among scientists right now about the issue of global warming and the effects of forestry on that. But as I understand it, in order to get final and conclusive evidence of whether or not global warming is a danger, we might have to wait 20 years. If we do wait 20 years for conclusive evidence and we find that in fact it is a danger, the danger will be upon us. It seems to me we should be responding now, even if we find it is not as serious a problem as some scientists predict it is, by greatly increasing our commitment to forest regeneration and the protection of the forestry resource.

I would like to know what we are doing to ensure that not just the industry but the government is meeting its obligations under the forest management agreements to ensure that the seedlings the government is obligated to supply and the funding for road construction and for forestry management under the FMAs are being met while at the same time the ministry is meeting its obligations on the crown management units; that you are not trying to meet your obligations under the FMAs by cutting back on what you should be doing on your own units. That brings up the old argument I have had with this ministry in particular, but it is an "It will cost the government" argument on privatization, cutbacks and contracting out.

I know the minister is going to be in my constituency in the near future to see one of the best plantations in North America at Kirkwood. I am concerned about the cutbacks at Kirkwood, to use an example, and the fact that we are not employing as many technicians as we have in the past and they are not being employed for as long as they were in the past, and ensuring that we are providing the kinds of seedlings we can and should be providing when we have shown at Kirkwood and other ministry plantations that we, as a ministry, as a provincial government—and I say "we" because I think all of us in the Legislative Assembly are committed to this—should be doing it rather than contracting it out to private contractors who might in fact themselves have worked for the ministry in the past.

There is also the economic issue. It is estimated that because of cutbacks in that area there was about \$145,000 lost to the local economy because we are not employing people at provincial government wages to do the job in the area.

By the way, before I leave that I am also concerned about cutbacks in the fire crews. I welcome the implementation of the ministry to go from three- to four-man fire crews and having backup. I think that is an indication that the minister can see when a mistake has been made and is prepared to rectify it, but I am concerned about some discussions of the ministry about the possibility of finding other sources for dealing with forest fires, particularly in organized municipalities, and to ensure that there is not going to be an attempt to try to transfer the responsibilities of the Ministry of Natural Resources for protecting the forestry resource from fire to municipal firefighting crews which do not have the expertise, the money or the staff to do it.

With fish and wildlife, I may have missed it, but I do not think there was any reference to the negotiation of the Indian fishing agreement by the ministry. I would like to have an update on that.

Also, I would like to get some information on what the ministry has finally decided, if anything as yet, about Moosetario, the lottery of moose tags and what we are doing in terms of the party licences.

I noticed and welcomed the comments by the minister with regard to the experimentation with rabies, but I also note that while this is happening rabies is spreading into the north. We have had warnings that it is already in the Sudbury district and is moving west and will likely reach the Sault Ste Marie area, my area, in the near future. That is a concern in terms of the protection of wildlife, of course, as well as of the human population of the north.

With regard to the fisheries review, I would like to know what the rationalization was for deciding who should be invited to Mr Riddell's open houses or discussions. I find that some communities directly related to commercial fisheries were omitted while some municipalities were invited which are not directly related to the commercial fisheries. Obviously we would want to invite sports fishermen, the people involved in

tourism as well as the commercial fishermen, but how were these decisions made? There are a number of people very upset because they were not invited.

I also notice in the briefing book the further cutbacks in road maintenance and funding for access points. If we are committed to tourism, particularly in northern Ontario, it seems to me that somebody has got to pick up the tab if the Ministry of Natural Resources is not going to do it. I have never found any evidence that any other ministry is prepared to do it. So who is, or are we just going to continue to let these roads deteriorate and let people use them at their own risk and risk their equipment? That certainly is not going to help tourism.

With regard to wetlands, you are darned right there has been consultation. There has been consultation and consultation. When is it going to end? When are we going to actually get some action on this? You know that 70% of the wetlands in southern Ontario have already been lost, 90% of the wetlands in southwestern Ontario have been lost already and there is no commitment, no reference to protecting the wetlands in northern Ontario, which I know are not threatened at this point but can be and will be.

I think I do not have anything further at this time to say as a leadoff, except that I would mention the conservation authorities review. I welcome the public consultation involved with that but would like to have some idea, beyond another liaison committee, what the ministry intends to do to try to deal with the concerns that have been raised by some small conservation authorities as well as some large ones, including the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, with regard to the recommendations and implementation of those recommendations.

I would like to say that while I recognize the step forward with the new Aggregate Resources Act—as a matter of fact, I am happy to say that I was part of that process in bringing about the amendments—where are we at with regard to declaring that act and implementing it in certain areas of the province where it does not yet apply? I was told it would be applied to at least the corridor along Highway 17 in the near future, and we have not seen that.

1620

Finally, I have a brief comment with regard to the outreach of the ministry, the education programs and the Experience program. I notice a serious cutback in that area in the briefing book. At a time when we are concerned about the environment and sustainable development, how does the ministry justify cutting back in that regard? It does not seem to me to fit.

I just conclude by saying that I look forward to the consideration of these estimates. There are very serious problems and serious challenges, but the potential for success, if we have a commitment to what the Brundtland commission called sustainable development, if we can straighten out in our own minds what we mean by that, then we might be on the way to building the kind of consensus that the minister said she hoped she could build. Obviously in this job there are times when we have to move when there is no consensus. Continue to have public consultation, which I welcome and think is very important, but committee upon committee upon committee eventually has to lead to implementation.

Mr Pollock: I would like to compliment the minister on parts of her opening statement, anyway. Some I agree with; some of it I do not agree with.

She states that last year they planted 162 million trees, and that is great. I am always a little concerned about how many of

these trees actually survive. That is an important part of the whole procedure as far as I am concerned.

One other thing she mentioned was the provincial parks. I found it a little interesting in this particular book on provincial parks that on one page she has the Ferris Provincial Park and the address is RR4 Brighton, Ontario. Ferris Provincial Park is just outside of Campbellford. I find it a little strange that the address would be in Brighton. Maybe there is an explanation for that. As I say, I have snowmobiled through Ferris Provincial Park. It is right next to the town of Campbellford and I find it a little strange that the address would be RR4 Brighton, which is at least 20 miles away.

I am also concerned about all the procedure as far as the Temagami agreement is concerned. We do not seem to be able to get a whole lot of information on just what that whole agreement was. We hear that they bought out a sawmill, and yet there seems to be no price for the sawmill. If there was a deal, there has to be a price or there is no deal. That is the way I would interpret it. I hear quotes of \$5 million, and maybe they are right. I do not know.

I understand there was also a severance package there too, which allows the workers to get all their severance pay. That is fine, but if they got that good a deal for Temagami, why was not something done for the Martin mill at Harcourt, and why were not the employees in that area given the same possible consideration? These people are feeling the pressures in that area. We know there are close to 80 people laid off for two months by Murray Bros Lumber mill in Renfrew. Jan Lumber is shut down for a period of time in Bancroft. That whole area there is really feeling the pinch because of the fact that the lumber industry is soft at this time and because maybe the building boom is over and things have kind of levelled off; we are actually on a downturn. But I just cannot understand why they did not get some assistance for those workers at Harcourt. I would like to have seen some agreement worked out with regard to the workers for that mill at Harcourt, so that mill could have continued operating.

It is a situation there that involves a lot of people. I know I read into the record one day here a resolution from Bangor, Wicklow and McClure wanting you to take action and see if something could be worked out with regard to that particular deal that was proposed by Robert Bury and Co. That is a concern, why those people did not get at least some kind of severance package with regard to the Martin mill at Harcourt.

Also, on page 5, you mentioned 2,400 fires last year. That was up from the 10-year average. Maybe right across Ontario it was not a normal year, but certainly in our area I thought the weather conditions were reasonably normal. The rainfall was normal. Possibly it was dryer in northern Ontario and that is why there were more fires in the overall situation across the province. But I find that a little surprising, that actually there were more fires started last year.

I think I have mentioned this on one other occasion, that that major fire we had two years ago, Kenora 14, actually started from fire getting started in a landfill site and then it spread into the bush. I just wonder whether any precautions have been taken around those landfill sites, because we know from time to time landfill sites do get on fire, whether it is accidental or deliberately set, but any landfill site in an area around stands of timber should have a bumper zone so the fire just could not spread into the bush, because that was one of the major fires that took place back in 1988.

I am also concerned about who picks up the cost of the Hagersville fire. The Ministry of Natural Resources, I under-

stand, did an excellent job in putting that fire out. No doubt a lot of man-hours and cost were involved, in so far as the Ministry of Natural Resources was concerned. I hope that would not come out of the Ministry of Natural Resources budget. I am not prepared to say who should pay the cost, but it certainly should not come out of the Ministry of Natural Resources budget, that is for sure. It is not their job to go around putting out tire fires.

With regard to zebra mussels, as you know, I am quite concerned about this. I agree with you that they are spreading through the Great Lakes. Apparently there is nothing we can do. I mentioned my concerns about the Trent-Severn waterway and also the Rideau waterway, whether we can protect them or not and whether we can actually protect our inland lakes.

It is all good and dandy to have some program out there advertising, "Take care of your boats, do this, do that," but sometimes I believe we should have some hard and fast rule saying you have to do this or there will be some extremely heavy fines for moving a boat from one lake to another without its being washed down or carefully checked over to see that there are no larvae stuck to the side of that boat. Once you get these zebra mussels in a lake, there is just no getting them out. You are as well aware of that as anybody, I am sure.

1630

I did not see any commitment in your statement of how much money you are going to actually spend with regard to fighting zebra mussels. In fact, I have a newspaper clipping here that the United States government is going to put up \$37.5 million to fight zebra mussels. There was just a reference in your statement, actually, with regard to zebra mussels, that you are concerned about them and that it is a major problem, but no commitment of dollars there to actually fight them or any really set guidelines of how you hope to keep them out of our inland lakes. As you say, they are a major concern.

I just want to mention that, as you are well aware, every year we lose a lot of people through drownings. We just had a tragedy up in Opeongo Lake in the Algonquin region where three people were drowned. Are the boats safe, or what is the problem? How come we are losing so many of these people? Are they going out into waters with boats that are too small?

I am not much of a fisherman, but I hear of these tragedies and they continue year after year and yet we do not really seem to have any handle on them or we do not seem to be making any progress in cutting down on the numbers of boating accidents. Apparently the waves, weather conditions and wind direction change pretty rapidly on some of those lakes. Maybe they are going out there with boats that are just too small to be out on those particular lakes. It is a pretty sad affair when you hear tell of or know of some of the people who are involved in some of these tragedies.

I have some major concerns too about what is really taking place as far as conservation authorities are concerned. There do not seem to be any hard and fast rules of when this whole changeover is or when the Burgar report is going to be adopted, if ever, and just what is really going to take place in that regard.

I might mention too that I have recently been in contact with a person who had this situation where he went to a conservation authority and asked what he had to do to actually do some development. The lady said that she would pass on the information to the engineer. We have come to find out they did not even have an engineer. The whole thing went round and round in circles. Finally, he presented his report on what he thought he should be doing and it just sat on a desk. They never got any response back and they are not getting anywhere with

trying to get this development through. He has been totally frustrated with this whole procedure.

I guess we are here to help those people out. I would just hope that the minister and her staff would look into this and see if something could be done for this chap, because after all it is time and money on his part. He has an engineer hired and they just do not seem to be getting the answers or any direction from that particular conservation authority. As I say, it is a concern of mine.

I guess you have mentioned that your decision on what is going to take place on abandoned railroads is going to come down in June. June is not really that far away. I would hope to have seen something about that in your statement. Unfortunately, there was nothing about abandoned railroads in there. There just seem to be a whole lot of different approaches out there about what is taking place.

I know of one particular abandoned railroad where the chap has got posts across the old right of way and signs up there saying, "Private Property, Keep Out." Maybe he has purchased that abandoned railroad, and if he has, fine and dandy, because I know that the government cannot possibly keep up every abandoned railroad in the province for recreation trails or whatever.

As I say, I am just curious to know what is taking place in that particular situation. I have talked to you on different occasions about the Marmora subdivision. Hastings county council is on record for supporting this particular subdivision to be a recreation trail, and yet it has been over 10 years since it started the process to get that abandoned railroad to be a recreation trail and as of yet we have no decision. I do not think you can just have a blanket policy for all of the abandoned railroads in the province, but surely on that particular one, when the local people are asking for it to be a recreation trail, I cannot see a problem with the ministry moving on it and at least stating what it is prepared to do, because it just seems to be dragging on. People are in some cases interfering with that particular right of way and in other cases there is a certain amount of maintenance that should be actually done on it because there are washouts on it, and it just sits there with no decision being made on it. People just wonder why a decision cannot be made on at least that particular right of way.

Those are some of the concerns I have. Maybe when we get into questions and answers, I might have a lot more concerns.

The Chair: The minister now has up to 30 minutes to respond.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure if I know exactly where to begin.

The Chair: I do not know where you should begin, but I know where you should end.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I was thinking I should have banked my 10 minutes that I did not use in presenting my original comments so that I could begin to respond adequately to all the comments that have been made by members of the committee, but I recognize that the rules do not allow that, so I shall restrict myself to 30 minutes and attempt to at least respond to some of the issues that have been raised. I know that we will have other opportunities in the detailed analysis of the estimates to deal with some of the more specific questions.

I recognize and appreciate the fact that there are many issues of importance that are not touched on in our opening comments. You would appreciate the fact that you cannot possibly achieve the thoroughness in 10 pages that my predecessors

might have achieved in 200 to 300 pages. Therefore, we have tried to highlight—

Mr Wildman: Your predecessor even missed some of the issues in 290 pages.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In all seriousness, I would like to suggest that the kinds of comments that have been made by both of the critics, who are members of the committee, reflect both the scope and the significance of the kinds of issues that we deal with in the Ministry of Natural Resources. That is something I have been impressed with in the months that I have held the position of minister, that the issues are in fact tremendously great in scope and in the range of their significance—significant in a global sense, truly a global sense, because many of the issues of resource management have global impact and are of global concern. It is not an exaggeration to say that. But as well, they are of tremendous significance to virtually every member in every riding of the province of Ontario. I do not think there is a member of the assembly who does not have a natural resource issue which is of concern to his or her constituents. I think that is indicative of the kind of responsibilities which we are addressing in the Ministry of Natural Resources. In all respects, whether we are talking about global or national or provincial or riding-specific kinds of issues, I think we take those responsibilities very seriously.

I appreciated the comments that Mr Wildman made in suggesting that the role of the ministry is not an easy one and that the whole question of sustainable development is a critical beginning point, even for us, in determining our mandate and how we fulfil our mandate. I suppose I have had some of the similar kinds of concerns that he expressed earlier in that, in the very short time since the Brundtland commission coined the term "sustainable development," it can be used so easily that it can almost become a cliché. I think that would be extremely unfortunate, because the term really does convey a sense of what is of critical importance in resource management.

1640

I think the definition is actually a fairly easy one to arrive at, because it does mean being able to use our resources to support development at the same time that we ensure that future generations will be able to benefit from the use of the resource. That, of course, necessitates that our use of the resource be managed in a way that we are conscious of its availability for the future, and that in turn entails that we be sensitive to the environmental values.

I think that for me the real challenge of a definition of sustainable development is not so much the words that we attach to a beginning definition but the way that we make it real in virtually every policy or practice that we implement as a ministry. That is where the real challenges of the definition of sustainable development come.

There is no question that the challenges of sustainable development have become more complex and more intense as more and more people express concern, express different interests, different values about the management of the resource, and as well, more and more people value that resource in terms of their own particular uses of the resource.

The comment was made that the term "multiple use" did not appear in the opening remarks. It may be a bit premature for me to come to conclusions about philosophies of management, but I am a little bit inclined to think that the term "multiple users" might even be more appropriate than "multiple use," because it concerns me, as a northerner, that the term "multiple

use" can perhaps mean as many different things to many different people as "sustainable development" does.

What we are really concerned about is to recognize the legitimacy of different views, different interests, different uses, and find the balance in the management of our natural resources to accommodate those different uses and different interests and different values. That, of course, is where the competition and often conflict comes. We are very much conscious of trying to achieve the balance that was mentioned earlier.

I am appreciative of the comments that were made about the challenges that may be posed to resource use in the future—the example of the fur industry and the boycotting of the fur industry—and how that can in turn spread to other resource uses.

I think perhaps the best assurance that we can possibly have that we can respond to challenges to the legitimacy of resource use is to ensure that we are in fact carrying out the best possible resource management and that we are carrying out that management in a way which is both sustainable for the future and environmentally sensitive. It is only through being able to provide that kind of assurance that we can respond to challenges as to the legitimacy of the use of the resource. That certainly is very much where the co-operation and communications become essential and where we put a premium on partnerships which are of fundamental importance, both in having co-operation and in building a sense of understanding and confidence in the way in which we are managing our resources.

I think the comments that have been made, if I could make just one last very general comment, support the guidelines that we feel are important as a ministry, which are sustainable development, valuing of our resources, having a good information base and building partnerships.

There were some very specific issues raised. I am not sure how many of them to attempt to address. Mr Chairman, the time expires—

The Vice-Chair: At five after 5.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Another 20 minutes. Let me just touch on some, and with your indulgence, if I am not able to respond to all of the issues that you raised, we can come back to them in future sessions.

I think one of the first concerns that was raised was the question of wood supply and support for the forest industry and whether or not there is timber supply that will ensure sustainable development in the forest industry. Certainly this is a concern that the ministry would share and one which we know has to be addressed in the development of a new timber production policy, and I did make reference to that in my introductory remarks. I have become very conscious of the fact that there is a sense of uncertainty in the forest industry, because it has been a time of both challenge and change in the management of the forest resource, and that the sense of uncertainty for the industrial users can only be allayed when we have a timber production policy which deals very clearly with the issues of: What is the availability of wood to support the industry; how does that respond to the need; what needs to be put back into the resource in order to ensure that there is future availability? This is a commitment which we have to ensure that there is a timber production policy developed in the next few months.

Certainly the whole question of sustained yield and addressing the backlog in regeneration has to be a part of what we consider in a timber production policy, but one of the things that I think has to be recognized, at least by the public, is that when we talk about a regeneration backlog, we are not talking

about barren lands in the northern part of the province, that harvested lands do in fact regenerate to some species of growth. What does not happen, of course, is that they regenerate to the commercial values which they had held originally, and therefore it clearly has an effect back on the issue of sustained yield and it becomes a component in our timber production policy.

The other comment I would make is that we have a very keen sense that a timber production policy must be part and parcel of a forest management policy which is truly an integrated resource management policy. It comes back to the comments that were made about the work that has been done at the ministry's instigation in inviting Dr Baskerville and Dr Rosehart to examine our forest management policies.

Mr Wildman: That was a joint investigation, as I recall.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Nevertheless welcomed by the ministry.

We are at the point of looking not only at timber production policy but at other aspects of our forest management policies and of wanting to have a renewed forest management policy for the 1990s. We want to be able to incorporate the work that has been done by Dr Baskerville and by Dr Rosehart and to look at the various components of policies which must be integrated in an overall forest management policy.

The question of the Temagami Stewardship Council and the agreement with the Teme-Augama Anishnabai was raised by both the critics in their comments, and I think you were asking for some detailed comment. Perhaps I could make a general comment first, in that I think that the stewardship council is an agreement that we have entered into not only because it is a step forward in the resolution of conflict within the Temagami area, but because we have a very real belief in the importance of involvement of our aboriginal peoples, both in the management of the resource and also in sharing the benefits of the resource, and while there will undoubtedly be different models in different parts of the province, I think the stewardship council is one example of the kind of involvement of our native peoples in resource management that we would want to encourage elsewhere.

Specifically in terms of the Temagami Stewardship Council, the 50% membership of government appointees has yet to be decided on and I would anticipate that it would be broadly representative of people who are concerned about management of the resource area as well as use of the resource.

The question of the negotiations that led to the decision to purchase the Milne mill from the Fryer group of companies was carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology, not, I believe, through the industrial restructuring commissioner but through the Ontario Development Corp. There was in fact a very specific price in terms of the dollars paid to Mr Fryer for the purchase of that mill. There are ongoing negotiations with the people who were employed in terms of options which they have, or severance arrangements, and I think that those particular arrangements are not finalized but should be finalized by the middle of next month. However, I would recognize that other ministries are playing key roles and have played key roles in that particular set of negotiations, so I would not presume to speak for the details of that in these few comments.

1650

The issue was also raised of the Harcourt mill by both of the critics, with a sense of a relationship between the Harcourt situation and the Temagami situation. Obviously, both are

similar in the sense that very difficult decisions were involved in both cases, but they are very different situations.

In the Harcourt situation, I would stress the fact that it was not a decision of the Ministry of Natural Resources to shut down the Harcourt mill, the mill in fact was not operational and had not been operational for a year. We had indicated that we were prepared to license the mill so that it could resume operations. The mill had operated in the past with 70% of its wood from private lands. There was quite clearly sufficient wood available to be able to run the mill with at least one shift. We had also indicated that if a decision was made to resume operations on that basis, in our review of the allocation of crown wood we would of course consider the Harcourt mill as one of the operating mills which would be considered for allocation of crown wood.

But we have a very real concern about the wood supply in the Harcourt area and the Algonquin region, and it is a concern which I know Mr Pollock has expressed to me, a similar concern on another opportunity. With a recognition that none of the mills in the area are functioning at capacity in terms of what they would be able to handle and in terms of economic viability, it would probably be advantageous if they had greater wood supplies.

I think the corollary is that a cutback in wood supply for any one of those mills is not without consequences in terms of potential layoffs of workers in other mills and other areas. So the decisions that we are making are fully cognizant that there is an impact on individuals, but I think we have to look not only at the individuals who were employed in the Harcourt situation but also individuals who are employed elsewhere in the Algonquin region.

These are not easy decisions and they are not arrived at without a lot of deliberation. The kinds of conflict over resource use that were being mentioned earlier are ones which have consequences for decisions that are not easy to make. The stress on the wood supply across the province is a real one—it is different in different areas—but as we look at the very legitimate concerns and needs to deal with environmental issues, to recognize different uses, different concerns, to set aside land for park, to recognize areas of natural scientific interest and act to preserve those, that obviously in turn adds greater stress to our wood supply and affects what is available for allocation. It entails some re-evaluation of our resource and the ways in which we make decisions about the allocation of the resource, and I guess again it emphasizes how important timber production policy will be.

I guess the other question that is raised is how we make real that issue of sustainable development, because if we are critical to some extent that many, many years ago—I would not suggest in recent years—there was not always a future orientation in the management of the resource, that there was a sense maybe that the resource would last indefinitely and a recognition now that that is not the case and that if we want to be able to use the resource to meet the needs of different users well into the future we have to look very carefully at the way in which we practise our resource management, we are going to have to make some difficult decisions and I think in each of our decisions we are going to have to be very careful not to make commitments that we in turn cannot sustain and not create expectations that we cannot fulfil.

I think that, to bring the Harcourt situation back to the Temagami situation and recognize some similarities and some differences, in Temagami a year ago, in a not dissimilar situation where a mill was shut down for financial reasons, quite

unrelated to wood supply at the time, a decision was made to support purchase and startup of the mill. It was not possible for a number of reasons for us to fulfil a commitment to wood supply to the Milne mill in Temagami, and that is the specific reason why we felt as a government that there was some obligation on our part to provide some support to ensure that in a situation in which other mills were in financial jeopardy because of the purchasing decision and the investment decision that was made a year ago, we had an obligation, again to workers in the area, to be able to provide some assistance in consolidating the operation of the other mills in the area.

I suppose an experience of that nature makes us very conscious of the fact that we have to ensure that when we make commitments to wood supply, we are able to fulfil those commitments.

There are, of course, many issues other than the question of forest resources which the Ministry of Natural Resources is involved in, and I think in your comments you touched on virtually every one of those and I am not possibly going to be able to get to all of them.

The wetlands policy consultation I would touch on because indeed there has been a very extensive consultation. In the course of that consultation a number of concerns were raised, primarily by environmental groups, about specific issues within our draft policy. I think it is worth pointing out that we take the consultation process very seriously, and because we have received those kinds of concerns in the consultation process, we are reviewing our draft plan. If there are to be significant changes to the draft plan, we think that some degree of consultation again is necessary. This is not in order to significantly delay having a policy in place, because we think it is urgent that the wetlands policy be in place so that it can affect planning decisions, that in fact the policy is seen to be a good direction for wetlands management in the future.

The Aggregate Resources Act has been proclaimed, as you know, and we are moving forward with the requests of communities to be included in the Aggregate Resources Act. To the extent that there is a specific timetable available, we can provide you with that.

It is back to timber production, I guess. The question of regeneration, silviculture, was put in the context of how many trees actually survive. I think it is an important question and perhaps leads me to comment on another area that I did not touch on in my opening remarks, and that is the very crucial nature of forest research and the importance we place on that within the ministry. A great deal of work is being done and I found it extremely impressive when I visited our research group in terms of what kinds of species and what kind of site management will ensure that we get the best possible results in terms of the survival of our silviculture on specific sites. I think a great deal of progress is being made in that area, and our survival rates are in fact increasing to a very significant degree.

There were, again, a number of specific questions asked. The budget for the Hagersville fire is recoverable through the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

You will probably ask me some specific questions about the zebra mussels as we get into the fisheries budget. We recognize there will be resources needed. We have signalled that to my colleagues in previous presentations, and we will in fact be discussing that with them in more detail when we have a clear sense of what programs we want to support and what resources are necessary for that.

The interministerial boating safety committee is to report this spring. We share your concerns about boating safety. Al-

though it is primarily a federal jurisdiction, we have had an interministerial committee chaired by the Ministry of Natural Resources which is looking at what can be done within the provincial jurisdiction.

The abandoned railroad lines are not mentioned in my opening comments because that committee is actually chaired by the Minister of Transportation. We do expect a report fairly soon.

A number of other areas: privatization and Indian fishing agreements; the forest management agreement versus crown silviculture; the fire crew size; the group takes for moose; rabies; the fisheries consultation—I trust all of these are issues that we can come back to. The conservation authorities review was mentioned by each of you in your comments. This is one of the issues in which it might be said that we have consulted and consulted and consulted again, and at what point in time are we finally going to decide to move on? I have a very real sense that is a criticism that can be directed towards us, and yet I have also a sense of discomfort with the kinds of concerns that are being raised by many of the conservation authorities.

Mr Wildman indicated a concern specifically of some of the smaller authorities and I think their concerns are related, some to amalgamation, but more specifically to budget. The first step for our implementation committee that we are establishing—and it is an implementation committee by way of signalling that we do intend to move forward with changes. But the implementation committee would work with each of the authorities to assess the impact of the recommendations on its particular budget so that we can determine whether in fact the funding formula that has been proposed has a differential impact on smaller authorities than it would have on urban authorities. If that were found to be the case, I think that is a concern we would want to address.

The Chair: You have eight minutes left.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I have eight minutes? Well, why do I not wrap up in any event and come back to some of the individual issues a little bit later on? If there are any issues that people feel will not be addressed in the individual votes, I can certainly attempt to comment on them now.

The Indian fishing agreements perhaps would not be addressed in the specific vote issue, and I would simply assure the members of the committee that it is an issue we are giving very serious consideration to in terms of the kind of process by which we can take forward the discussions and negotiations about Indian fishing agreements and ensure they can be carried out successfully.

1700

Mr Wildman: I am sure Frank Miclash will not blindsides you the way one of your predecessors at the ministry did on this issue.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am conscious of the fact that there has been some history of taking a step forward and a step or two backwards, and I think we are very conscious of the fact we must have a process which ensures, as we begin again the discussions on Indian fishing agreements, that they can reach a successful resolution of the discussion. So we are working very consciously towards that right now.

My wrapup comment was simply going to be that I am conscious of the fact that my own particular style is one of consultation. I believe that for government to make good decisions, we have to know the issues well from many different perspectives. While the term "consensus" is in my opening

remarks, I use it with a little bit of reluctance because I am not sure that in resource management issues, if you have a broadly consultative process and you really reach a point of understanding what the different views are, there are many situations in which you can truly get consensus, if consensus means unanimous agreement that the direction you are going is the best of all possible worlds. But I do think that by carrying out a consultative process we end up making better decisions, and I certainly agree that there comes a point in time at which you have to say we do have a sense of what the different views are and we have a sense of what direction we feel is the best to take to achieve the balance we are looking for.

My caveat would always be that, before we make the tough decisions, we have a fairly clear sense that we know what the implications are and we feel confident that we are taking the next steps in the right direction.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I neglected to mention when we started that the vote we are considering is vote 2801 of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Subject to a challenge right now, it would be my intention to stay on that vote until our seven and one half hours are up and allow members leeway to ask questions on any subject.

I think there is one way we could be accommodating. As I understand it, there are three people here from the forestry branch of northern Ontario and, although the assistant deputy minister will be here throughout the estimates, there are a couple of people whom we could accommodate. I presume, by agreeing that we would deal with any forestry items today and tomorrow to save them a trip back next Tuesday. Is that agreeable to the committee?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I do not know if that needs to be a concern from the ministry's perspective, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: No, but we are here to save money. This is the estimates committee and, for once, we are going to talk about money; I mean, just this minute.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We are concerned that the executive director of the forest resources group is not able to be here, but is expected to be here on the last day.

The Chair: Oh, that way, all right. Well, we save 43 items until the last day then. Okay, we will not talk about forestry until next week. Is that all agreeable? It says here I am supposed to apportion the time among the recognized parties on the committee. I was not sure what "apportion" meant so I looked it up in the Oxford dictionary and it says "to give as due share." Now, what due share does any party claim here?

Miss Roberts: We claim an equal share, no matter how many people there are in any recognized party.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Chairman. I do indeed respect the need of the members of the party that supports the government to participate in the estimates process and I think it is useful for them and for the public. But on the other hand, the minister does indeed speak for the government and the minister's time is government time. I am not sure that means a fair apportionment if individual backbenchers on the government side are given the same amount of time as the opposition critics.

Miss Roberts: We have not taken any away from the opposition critics. Because Mr Wildman was not here the last time when we did this, in the fall, we apportioned the time equally.

The backbenchers would ask questions and time was done equally between all three parties. That was the agreement between the subcommittee. That has been dealt with.

Mr Wildman: It is your committee, not mine.

Miss Roberts: We try not to take too much of your time and energy.

Mr Pollock: I just want to be clear. Does the member mean that the government members have as much time as the two opposition parties?

Miss Roberts: No, equal: one third, one third, one third.

Mr Pollock: Okay, that is fine with me.

The Chair: Does anybody else wish to speak on the point that Mr Wildman makes?

Mr Charlton: Mr Chairman, as you are well aware, as we move through a transition from the way in which estimates have been handled for ever to what we hope in the future will be a somewhat less partisan and perhaps more open committee in terms of really digging into and dealing with the effectiveness of government programs, I think the comments of the member for Elgin reflect the discussions the committee has had over the course of the last few months.

The Chair: Mr Wildman will consult with Mr Charlton if he has any problems with the way we are doing it.

Mr Wildman: No, I do not have any problem with it.

The Chair: We will start apportioning the time right now, starting with Mr Wildman.

Mr Wildman: Main office: I notice in the estimates book that the increase in regard to vote 2801, item 1, is close to \$1.25 million. In some other significant vote items there are lower amounts, except if one looks at information systems, which shows a significant increase. I was just wondering if we could have some explanation as to the reason for the substantial increase in the 1990-91 estimate for information systems, as opposed to not only the 1989-90 estimate but the actual expenditures, which were considerably less.

That is another point I would like to make comment on in passing. It is interesting to note that in many places throughout the estimates the actual expenditures fell significantly short of the estimates from last year. I am wondering if there is a particular reason for what appears to be a pattern throughout the estimate. Is this just parsimony on the part of someone in the administration or is it in fact a conscious decision to cut back on what was originally planned for the ministry's programs the previous year? For instance, if in 1988-89 you could deliver your information programs for a little over \$5 million, why do we suddenly need over \$11 million the next year to carry out your program under information systems?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think we will have the deputy make some detailed comments about the information technology item. Is 2801, item 5, the specific vote you are looking at?

Mr Wildman: Yes, I am trying, in line with what the Chair indicated, to view all of them together, but that is a specific question I would like to get an answer for.

1710

Hon Mrs McLeod: I will refer the specific questions on information technology to the deputy, other than to recognize that it was my understanding coming into the ministry that pre-

vious analysis of the information technology capacity of the ministry was to suggest that it needed significant expansion for us to be in the 20th century in terms of our ability to use information technology and that therefore the increase in budget simply reflects the necessity of being able to have a computer capacity within the ministry for the sake of the efficiency that brings. I will refer the details to the deputy.

Mr Wildman: Before Mr Tough responds, I would just like to ask, in line with what the minister has just said, how is it you underspent by about \$2 million last year?

Hon Mrs McLeod: That is a question I will refer to the deputy.

Mr Tough: If I could make a couple of points, first of all to underscore and agree heartily with the minister's comment about the pre-existing state of our information technology and our systems development, a number of the points that have been made by the critics about our natural resource information systems, our capacities in a number of other areas, are tied directly to our information technology capacity, which has been found wanting for some years.

We were very disappointed last year that we were not able to launch a major initiative on information technology. Our strategic plan for information technology has been prepared and is being reviewed by the Management Board Secretariat analyst. We think it will find some support over there, and when it does find approval by Management Board, we will find ourselves launched on a major improvement on our information technology systems which, as the member knows better than most, is extremely important in a ministry that is so highly decentralized as ours, where it is necessary to wire in a whole series of more than 50 different locations in the province. The member knows from his travels around northern Ontario particularly that we are not there yet.

We do not have a capacity to communicate effectively between our districts and regions or regions and main office nor, up until very recently, did we have a capacity even to communicate effectively within the main office component. We have a very long way to go. We have a major commitment made for next year.

The member is right: We underspent last year and that was a major disappointment. We had set aside the funds for it and unfortunately we were not able to get launched. We really must get going on that, and hence the major increase.

If I could just for 30 seconds respond to the point about the comparison between estimates in 1989-90 and the interim actual, there are some up and there are some down. I think we find imbalance on vote 2801. I think we are up a little bit in terms of our actual spending compared to our estimates, although, to be sure, there are some which fall and some which rise.

Mr Wildman: In this regard, with item 3, human resources, you are talking about general administration in the main office. Is it fair to say that has been flat-lined? You have an increase of about \$350,000.

Mr Tough: Yes, \$349,000. That is correct.

Mr Wildman: I am asking if that has been flat-lined.

Mr Tough: It is approximately flat-lined. That is correct. There is an explanation of the expenditure change on the next page of the estimates, I think it is page 20, the ups and the downs.

Mr Wildman: With regard to the philosophy of the main office and how the ministry intends to deliver its services, is it unfair of me to say that the ministry essentially is—I was going to say “offloading,” but I hate that term; I do not know why people who use it do not say “unloading”—unloading responsibilities that it has in fact fulfilled in the past, sometimes to consultants or private contractors and other times to resource users, and is essentially seeing its role as monitoring the clients with ministry guidelines and regulations by firms that are in the private sector and are being made responsible for carrying out ministry programs that in the past were done directly by ministry staff.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You are not asking that question specifically in relationship to main office functions.

Mr Wildman: No, I am talking about the overall philosophy of the ministry, the administration of the forest resources, for instance.

I will give you an example. The overall administrative philosophy is determined in main office. That is why I am asking it under the first vote. It seems to me, for instance, that loggers, small jobbers who have crown licences, are now being told that while in the past forestry technicians in the district offices used to be responsible for demarcating the area of the licence, for drawing the lines, now they themselves will have to draw the lines and that the role of the technician is to monitor the drawing of the lines and to ensure that the jobber is not doing any unauthorized cutting; in other words, has not drawn the lines in the wrong place, is not cutting trees that he is not supposed to cut. If in fact the monitor, the technician who is monitoring it, finds that this is the case, that the individual has drawn the lines in the wrong place and is cutting in the wrong place, either mistakenly or through malfeasance, then the technician slaps a fine on the individual.

I am using that as an example, but you could look at a number of other examples of the way that this ministry is operating today. It seems to me the philosophy as determined by the administration of this ministry is that instead of delivering the programs and the particular aspects of the management of the resources themselves, the ministry's approach seems to be that the ministry staff should in fact be monitoring compliance with guidelines set forward by the ministry, rather than doing the work themselves.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I suspect that to answer that question adequately we would almost need to go to each branch of the ministry and look at the particular delivery of programs within that branch and what decisions have been made in terms of the most effective way of using ministry personnel to deliver the programs. I think you would find not by any means a philosophy of offloading or unloading responsibility for resource management program delivery, but much more a recognition of trying to use ministry staff as effectively as possible. If there are areas of work that are being carried out by ministry personnel which could be more effectively done by someone else in the field, then that would be a philosophical reason for changing the way in which we use personnel in that particular operation.

If you were to look, for example, at the Aggregate Resources Act implementation, you would find the ministry hiring a significant number of additional personnel in order to administer the Aggregate Resources Act. So you would not find one philosophical approach that says that we are becoming less and less involved in direct program delivery.

1720

Mr Wildman: Okay, then am I to understand that there are no memos from George Tough indicating that monitoring is the way to go?

Mr Tough: May I note a specific one? I have made a number of memos and sent a number of things to my people. On top of what the minister says, which is that we have a responsibility to deploy the resources that are made available to us in the most effective and efficient way, if that means that in particular cases the most effective way for us to use our professionals or our resource technicians is to use them in a monitoring role, yes, I would do that. I would recommend that we do that. In other cases where it is important that we do remain front and centre in resource management and right out at the field level, I would press for that.

I would very much support the minister's view that those are in large measure pragmatic decisions. If I can use the resources that are made available to me—and they are significant, but they are not anywhere near what anyone in this room would consider to be adequate for us to be all things to all people—then I would be looking for ways to deploy them in more effective ways.

Also, we would be receptive to the continuation of the kinds of procedures that we have in terms of partnerships. We think those are very effective arrangements and we would welcome a continuation of those kinds of participations.

Mr Wildman: Okay, I will not prolong this, except to say that in regard to the example I used, the private contractors, certainly in my area, who met with Mr Riley last Friday night, do not believe that this is the most effective way of delivering a program. They are very concerned about what they see as an offloading on to them, without any training, and an unfair imposition on them when they are already having to deal with a very bad market situation and a situation where they are being pressed by workers' compensation costs and other costs that are completely aside from this ministry's operations and making it very difficult for them to continue to operate in any way close to a profitable situation.

Could I just close off at this point by asking this? Under field administration, item 8, if you look at the estimates here, there is a significant decline, over \$2 million, and if you look at page 30 of the briefing book, in the explanation of expenditure changes it says there is a cut of over \$2 million in “reprioritization of funding requirements” and another cut in “realignment to reflect administrative costs attributable to programs.” I really would like to have a coherent explanation or translation of that arcane bureaucratese.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think we can try to do it both generally and specifically. I certainly would not be able to give you specifically on those two particular lines how the reprioritization takes place, other than to recognize that there has been in the use of our available financial resources a redefinition of key priorities, and one of the emphases within the ministry in this particular set of estimates was to put a renewed focus on our firefighting budget, on our parks management, and also on the information technology, which you have already addressed.

Obviously that comes hand in hand with our appropriate efforts, as one of the ministries of the government, to deal with constraint within our budget and still to accommodate the priorities that we think are significant ones. On a line-by-line

basis or something more specific, the deputy will have to continue.

Mr Tough: The repriorization—and I am sorry for the arcane language there, and doubly sorry because it appears on a number of pages here—is essentially us moving money around to where we think we need it out of field administration, trying to reduce our administrative costs in the field so that we can redeploy the funds elsewhere.

The realignment is an ongoing issue in most ministries. Certainly in a ministry as complex as ours, and one which has a whole series of programs, where do you attribute the costs of what you do? Do you attribute the costs to the particular program or do you lump all those costs in something called administration?

Mr Wildman: Sorry, if I can just interrupt for a moment, that is really what I am trying to get at. I am trying to find out whether this is just an accounting change or whether it is in fact a cut in field administration. If it is, what does it mean in terms of program and delivery of program?

Mr Tough: The repriorization is, if you like, a cut. It is a reduction in the amount of funding that is available in the program. The realignment is essentially a reassignment, a recognition of those expenditures in some of the other programs for which the administrative program may have provided services. So that does not come out of the ministry, if you like, that moves out into the programs.

Mr Wildman: Okay. If it is a cut, what does that mean in terms of the program? Where have you decided that you can reduce spending?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Specific program areas.

Mr Tough: The \$2 million will reappear filtered through a whole bunch of programs: fisheries, forestry and that sort of thing. It does not disappear from the ministry.

Mr Wildman: Okay. I yield the floor then. I am not sure I found out; it is arcane.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In the fullness of time perhaps.

The Chair: Who would like to speak next?

Mr Pollock: Do you fellows want to use up all your time right now?

The Chair: No, you cannot do that.

Mr Wildman: No, I do not.

Mr Pollock: Has there been any significant change in the way the people who actually sell fishing licences and hunting licences turn that money over to your ministry?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I would not describe it exactly as a change in the way in which they turn the money over to the ministry, in the sense that they are not required to prepay licences. If they are selling licences within the province of Ontario, they have always been allocated licences and returned the payment to us based upon the actual sale of the licences. Out-of-province licence issuers had to prepay for their licences.

As you well know, we have now discontinued our policy of having out-of-province licence issuers, so we only have a small number of out-of-province licence issuers who have been grandfathered at the time of our change in policy. They would still be required to prepay for the licences which they receive,

but in-province licence issuers would pay on the basis of the sale of licences.

There has been a change from one aberrant year—I think it was a single aberrant year—in which licences were not pre-numbered and were distributed in bulk to our licence issuers. We have gone back to a pre-numbering system, so a licence issuer is given X number of licences and would have to remit payment based on the number of those licences sold. If that is incorrect, please, people, correct that.

Mr Pollock: As you might know, I am fishing without a licence here.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Actually, there is quite a significant charge for that.

Mr Pollock: There is something really the matter with this whole situation, because I know of one situation where actually he sold licences for two and a half years and never turned over one dollar to the ministry. I find that just deplorable that this situation actually was allowed to exist for that length of time. I can understand that over a three-month period or something similar that could happen, but for it to go on for two and a half years, I just cannot believe that really took place.

It was my understanding that it was the policy of the ministry a few years ago that if you sold hunting and fishing licences, you put that money into a separate account and then at the end of the month you transferred the amounts over to the ministry. I hear through the grapevine that that has been all changed, that you are allowed to just use all that money for cash flow and then pay at the end of the month. To me, that just does not seem like good accounting. I just cannot understand why that sort of situation was allowed to go on like that. My final question is, how widespread is this?

1730

Hon Mrs McLeod: I trust in fact that it is not widespread in terms of the specific situation that you are mentioning, and we are aware, obviously, of that situation, because we have discussed it before. I think that is a very rare occurrence, although certainly the Provincial Auditor in the last auditor's report indicated that we needed to increase our accounting procedures for our licence distribution, which we have done in terms of returning to the pre-numbered system. In fact, our own internal analysis had already indicated that we needed to do that.

I am not sure that you could in fact dictate to individual licence issuers the way in which they manage the cash flow within their particular business, but certainly there is an expectation that there be an immediate remittance of the licence fees that have been collected. The particular situation you mention I think we would probably agree was an unwarranted degree of leniency.

Mr Pollock: If you are actually doing the licences of these places that sell the licences, I think you have the right to say, "Come a certain period of time, we want the money." It is the public's money they are paying in. They are paying a legitimate fee for a service, and therefore that money should flow right through to the ministry and not actually be used as cash flow and that sort of thing.

You answered the question that I was actually fishing for, that if the auditor has stated that there is a problem here, then the problem has to be more than just that one outstanding individual I am referring to. It has to be a little bit more

widespread than that. In fact, I guess for him to actually put his finger on it, it had to be fairly major.

Hon Mrs McLeod: That one example that you are aware of is a particularly extreme example, but in fact there has been an increased intensity of accounting procedures, for one thing, using our district offices more than was done in the past. We do have an expectation that the licence fees that are collected will be remitted at the appropriate times and in full. We have to have our own accounting procedures tightened up to ensure that we are able to track that that is happening. That is what we have done internally. We made sure we can track that the fees are being remitted in a timely fashion.

Mr Pollock: But in getting to your budget, you have a budget increase of 4%; your budget was increased 4% from the Treasurer. Therefore, if you only got a 4% increase, your ministry has to pay out pay equity and also the health payroll tax. In some other cases—I know of other cases, put it this way—where they had to pay out pay equity and the health payroll tax, that pretty well ate up that 4% increase. You are really not getting any increase at all to run your particular ministry. You might say you are really not getting any increase at all, because that 4% is pretty well eaten up with the health payroll tax and pay equity.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is a fairly general question to be able to answer and I am not sure whether I could ask for people to comment on the total cost of the two items that you raised.

Certainly there is an effort within this budget to bring about reductions in some areas in order to allow for expansion of programs in other areas. That is the whole question of shifting in priorities which we were talking about a little bit earlier. There is no question that presents a challenge to our ministry, as I think it has to each ministry. We did have a commitment to maintaining as reasonably balanced a budget as was possible to maintain. The Ministry of Natural Resources was taking its share of responsibility in that regard.

Mr Pollock: I mentioned in my comments Ferris Provincial Park. Is that a misprint or what is that? Do you want some time to check that out?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I made a note to check that. I am not sure if anybody here could comment on the address of Ferris park or whether they would like to check that. We will check on that.

Mr Pollock: Okay. Maybe there is a phone in there, which would really surprise me, but I just wondered why.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We will check that.

Mr Pollock: Are our provincial parks being utilized pretty well across the province?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. I would perhaps put a little bit of a caveat in terms of broadly across the province. I have not got statistics in front of me, but my understanding is that there is a very heavy demand, primarily on the southern Ontario parks, in fact a demand beyond the capacity of many of the southern Ontario parks to handle at peak weekend periods. There is less demand on, although still good utilization of, our northern parks. One of the concerns that I would like to address as minister as well as a northern representative is for greater communications, greater emphasis on the fact that we have some marvellous parks resources in the northern part of our province, as we do in the southern parts of our province, and to encourage people to take advantage of the parks resources that we do have

in the northern part of the province so that it is a little more evenly distributed in terms of demand and use.

Mr Pollock: We had a situation, I believe, two years ago where people were complaining. What was taking place was that they were phoning in and reserving a spot. They did not have to pay anything so eventually, if it was a rainy weekend, they did not bother going. Sometimes they just reserved that spot, but they may have reserved two or three places and then they took a choice. As I said, they did not have to pay anything in. Therefore, there were spots being held and reserved at provincial parks and yet the government was not getting any money for them and they were taking up some of those spaces. I wonder if that kind of situation ever got resolved.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think we do have a reservation fee now. I am looking to see. There is a \$3.50 reservation fee for reserving spots in parks now.

Mr Pollock: I see. So to a point that is correcting that particular problem. At least there is some money coming in if they do not take that spot. What is the overall price? How does that compare to the money you lose if they do not take it?

Mr Christie: My name is Ron Christie. I am the executive director of the outdoor recreation group. The fee for this year is approximately \$14 a day for a fully serviced site.

Mr Pollock: In regard to the mill at Harcourt, you made mention of the fact that Martin bought 75% of its lumber from private individuals.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I indicated 70%, but it was 75%

Mr Pollock: Now apparently that was what they claimed they had done in the last year. In previous years it was basically about 50-50; they bought 50% from private property owners and 50% came off crown timber licences.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the five-year average would show that it is in fact more in the area of 25% to 26% crown wood that was being used by Harcourt.

Mr Pollock: For the whole five years? There is a difference in comments that I get from—

Hon Mrs McLeod: This is based on figures actually submitted by G. W. Martin at the time of its operation.

Mr Pollock: I know that last year they agreed it was 75% roughly. Anyway, they said it was basically around 50-50.

Mr Wildman: If you were to colour-code those notes, how many would be blue and how many would be red?

Hon Mrs McLeod: We do not colour-code the notes.

Mr Pollock: I do not believe you put it on the record, though, just what was paid for the mill at Temagami.

1740

Hon Mrs McLeod: I did not put it on the record because it is not within my ministry budget, but I can obtain that figure. I would not want to give it to you from memory of the negotiations.

Mr Wildman: I have got \$6.5 million, of which about \$1.29 million is for severance. I do not know if those figures are right, but those are the ones I have got.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I would not want to say whether or not those are final figures. I think we would want to defer to the

ministry that is involved in actually carrying on the discussions, but we can attempt to see what figures are available and whether they are final.

Mr Pollock: In regard to conservation authorities, do you at any time make grants available to them so that they, in turn, might be able to purchase a certain property if a local conservation authority in a local area felt that particular piece of property should go into public ownership?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, there is a land acquisition budget. It is a relatively modest budget in terms of what you might wish to bring into public ownership, but there is a land acquisition budget as well as, I think, a hazard lands acquisition budget which can be handled through transfer payments to the conservation authorities.

Mr Pollock: Okay, but what is a modest budget in that regard?

Hon Mrs McLeod: There is an ongoing land acquisition budget. There is also a hazard land acquisition fund which was augmented, I believe, for a particular purchase that was made within the past year which would not be part of our ongoing budget. I am not sure whether or not people here would be prepared to give those specific figures today, but we could have those for you for the next day separated out into those categories. Mr Vrancart is nodding his head to say he would like to have them for the next day rather than provide them today.

Mr Pollock: Okay, that is fine. I will wait for the next day. I will pass.

Mr Miclash: Minister, as you are aware, I am from an area where we cut a lot of trees. I often have the concern expressed to me about the replanting of these trees. I was just wondering if you could expand a little bit on the past practices, what we are doing presently and what we are looking forward to in the future in terms of replanting of the forests that are used in the various industries throughout my riding.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. It is a fairly complex question to answer and not one on which I am going to pretend to have all the details myself. It might be most appropriate to have a more detailed discussion when the executive director of our forest resources group is here, although certainly there are people from the forestry branch here today who could help me in responding to it. There is an indication of our silviculture budget, of the funds that we put into regeneration and of the increase in areas that have been regenerated over recent years. There are differences in terms of the way in which the silviculture is carried out on lands under forest management agreements and lands under crown licences. You might want to help me with some more specific questions that we could address.

Mr Miclash: I am thinking in terms of success rate as well. When replanting takes place, whether it be under one or the other agreement, how is it checked out, what are the success rates of the seedlings actually growing into mature trees, the time it takes?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Mr Oldford from my forest resources group is going to give you a forester's expert information on this.

Mr Oldford: My name is Gordon Oldford, director of forest management. The success rates that we are getting in our tree planting have improved tremendously since, say, the 1980s

when we signed the first forest management agreements. Right now the success rate in tree planting would range in the 85% to 90% and, on some sites, in the 95% range. We are planting approximately 162 million to 163 million trees per year. Tree planting is a very costly venture. What we try to do in our renewal program is have a balance of the expensive forms of renewal, like tree planting, with other, more economic forms of renewal like aerial seeding. The approaches that were taken to management are intended to encourage that.

Mr Miclash: Say you are planting 162 million trees. How would that compare to what is actually being cut in a particular year?

Mr Oldford: You are asking a question there that I do not like to address in those specific terms. We plant about 1.7 trees for every tree that we harvest. The fact is that when we plant trees, they are small trees. When we plant an area—for instance, an acre of forest land—we plant approximately 1,000 trees. When we harvest an acre of forest land, we do not harvest 1,000 trees, because in the progression and growth of that stand over a period of 60 or 70 years, there are certain trees that do not make it to maturity. But it is necessary to plant that density, that 1,000 trees at the initial stage so that the site is fully occupied; in other words, so that the trees grow tall and straight rather than be bushy like Christmas trees.

Mr Miclash: Another area I would like to move on to is in terms of the youth in the Ministry of Natural Resources. I have indicated to you before that I was involved in the Junior Ranger program and I believe you refer to it here as the Ontario ranger program. Is it the same thing? It is no longer called the Junior Ranger program? Has there been a name change?

Hon Mrs McLeod: No, there is not a name change. It is still called the Junior Ranger program.

Mr Miclash: It is referred to in your speech as the Ontario ranger program. A particular question on the Junior Ranger program, if we are still calling it that: Where it is at in terms of numbers today, and is it as popular as it was in the past? What is actually happening to that program?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am just looking for the particular vote item to indicate to you that, in general terms, there has been a concern about a decline in interest in the Junior Ranger program and a decline in applicants. I think our number of participants for last year will indicate a lower number. If somebody could quickly give me my page reference, I would be able to give the exact numbers. The proposal for next year is that we would attempt to maintain the previous numbers of people in the Junior Ranger program, but to revitalize that program so that we might be able to attract more applicants into the Junior Ranger program.

Mr Gordon: My name is Roger Gordon. I am the acting assistant deputy minister, administration. In terms of specific numbers, the numbers are being maintained this year in relationship to last year. There was, however, a reduction the year before in the Junior Ranger program to basically reflect a fall-off in applications. We are competing with McDonald's. If you have tried to get a baby-sitter, there is a real shortage. The demographics of that age group are such that they are very much in demand. So there was not the number of applications.

Mr Wildman: For one thing, you are not paying them.

Mr Gordon: This year the wages have been increased in the Junior Ranger program to bring them in line with the minimum wage laws.

Mr Miclash: I remember it was \$10 a day. What would they be paid?

Mr Gordon: They are now getting minimum wage.

Mr Miclash: Minimum wage for an eight-hour day, a 40-hour week?

Mr Gordon: Yes.

Mr Miclash: That is good news.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In addition, there is a room and board component associated as well with the Junior Ranger program?

Mr Gordon: Yes. You are allowed to withhold from wages a proportion for room and board. What we have done is we have done that calculation in terms of working out an hourly rate and then we hold a portion for room and board. Instead of it being a flat \$10 and room and board free, we have worked out the combination.

1750

Mr Miclash: When you say you are devising a new marketing strategy for bringing youth into the program, what are some things that you were doing in terms of making it maybe a little bit more attractive?

Mr Gordon: A number of initiatives; one is we have implemented a couple of bilingual camps which are proving quite popular. We are trying to do some outreach to native people. We had a concern that it was very much a program of young, white, urban kids, so we are doing some real outreach to try and reach into other communities.

Over the last few years, since you were probably a Junior Ranger, there has been a very significant increase in terms of the number of women attending the Junior Ranger programs. We are trying to get it to be more representative of the youth population. We need to reach that whole market now because we just cannot focus on young 17-year-old men, as it was 10 years ago.

Mr Miclash: You mentioned your outreach to native people. Has that been done over this past summer or is that something you are going to be doing?

Mr Gordon: We have had a couple of experiments with native Junior Rangers. What we have found to be more effective for them is a program which does not involve the same amount of camp experience. A lot of the native kids have to go away to school, so when we take them away to give them a camp experience for the summer as well, that naturally means total isolation from parents. We have been trying to work a program that lets them participate as Junior Rangers, get that resource experience, but by the same token, maintain a home relationship as well.

Mr Wildman: Since we are going to be dealing with forestry next week, perhaps it would be useful if I were to put on the record, very briefly, some of the questions that I would hope that you and the staff, when they are here, can answer.

First, I would like to know how many acres or hectares of cutover crown land have been cut in the last year and how many hectares have been treated. Under treatment, I mean replanting, aerial seedings, scarification, whatever. I would like

to know how many hectares under forest management agreements have been cut, and how many treated as well.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In your first question, when you said "crown land," you meant crown licensed?

Mr Wildman: Yes, it is crown use. I would also like to know how much revenue accrued to the Treasury of the province from crown dues; that is, how much dumpage did you get and how does that compare with the budget for regeneration? I would also like to know, under the FMAs, how much was allocated for resource road access construction and whether or not that, in fact, was a money-maker for the companies under the FMAs, rather than what it should be. I will just put those on the record. I do not expect to be answered today.

I have a couple of questions with regard to pages 3 and 4. This deals with classified and unclassified staff, which I suspect some in the ministry think is a hobby-horse of mine. I am interested in the north central region figures, the northern region, the northeastern region, the eastern region and the central region. When you look at those figures on page 3, is it not somewhat distressing to see that the 12-month average unclassified staff, in most of those regions, outdistances classified staff?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think there would be a number of explanations, one at least of which I would attempt, which would include the great amount of tree planting that is done in northern Ontario on crown lands.

Mr Wildman: Sure. I agree with that. I certainly agree that backup fire crews and tree planters and some people who work in parks and so on are seasonal employees. I accept that, but I am looking at the 12-month average and that is what concerns me, because I am wondering, for instances, how many clerical people, how many people who work as support staff—carpenters, road graders, heavy equipment operators—all of those kinds of people who are not directly involved in seasonal jobs are in fact unclassified or contract employees. I would like to have an explanation of that.

Mr Gordon: It is interesting that you should bring that up; there have been negotiations. You may be aware of a new contract signed, not yet ratified, between the Ontario Public Service Employees Union and the government that is going to address that to a certain extent.

Mr Wildman: I very seldom have any contact with the labour movement.

Mr Gordon: Let me tell you about it then. In terms of the mix of non-technical staff within those unclassified numbers, there will certainly be some clerical and support staff. They will, however, generally be doing administration during the seasonal peaks. Our managers are very sensitive to not having people around—

Mr Wildman: Let's cut to the real nub of the issue. How many of them are forestry technicians? How many of them are people doing clerical work who are on ongoing renewable contracts who work nine months, 11 months, or whatever, take time off, get unemployment insurance, and then are rehired on a new contract? I want to know how many people are you actually using that you need, only you are using them in this way to avoid having to increase your overall complement.

Mr Gordon: I do not have a specific breakdown to a question like that.

Mr Wildman: I am asking for it. I do not expect you to have it today, but perhaps by the end of the estimates you will have it for me.

Mr Pollock: Could I possibly have a breakdown, and I know you would not have this at your fingertips, of the \$11-million expenditures from resident fishing licences, and also the breakdown of the \$18 million of expenditures you received from the softwood lumber tax?

Hon Mrs McLeod: The first, I think, we could provide, because the information on the fisheries budget from the licence money is kept separate and reported to the fishing advisory committee. I am getting assent that we can in fact provide that as a separate breakdown.

The allocation to the forestry budget of the \$18 million becomes part of our forest management budget, so we would not be able to separate out \$18 million that specifically was allocated as a replacement essentially for the federal government's co-operative money. It becomes part of the forest management budget. There are certainly components of the co-operative programming which we are continuing, but I would hesitate to say that there is a direct correlation between that transfer of funds and the former specific co-operative program, so I am not sure that we could give you that breakdown.

Mr Pollock: Okay. In this whole business of replanting trees, you are supposed to be planting more trees than you are cutting, right? But then there is also the natural regrowth. Now, the regrowth is what kept the country growing for years and years, because there were very few trees planted. We just feel that the regrowth took over and did its own thing and grew up. How many trees do you regard as sprouting and starting up on their own? What percentage?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think that is a question that is related to the questions that Mr Wildman tabled in terms of the regeneration statistics that he would like to have presented when we talk about the forestry budget. I think the question is an important one, because there is a natural regeneration which occurs which I think the ministry refers to as unassisted regeneration, and that would be included in our regeneration statistics, as I understand it, provided that the type of regeneration that occurs naturally is to a species that continues to meet our commitment to a sustained yield of that particular species for our timber production policies.

There is another kind of natural growth which occurs because, as I was suggesting earlier, the land does not stay barren. You would get a natural vegetation that occurs. But if it is not the kind of regrowth that would be for replacement of a com-

mercial species, then it would not, as I understand it, be counted in our regeneration statistics. So we are talking about two kinds of regrowth.

There will be components of our regeneration statistics that include a natural regeneration because, for instance, the poplar will regenerate to poplar and continue to be able to be harvested to meet that requirement of those who are using the poplar species. Then there is a tended kind of regeneration, and then there is a plantation that takes place because natural regeneration would not produce, for example, a spruce tree in that particular location.

Mr Pollock: In other words, you are not replanting poplar.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We are not replanting poplar.

Mr Pollock: They do it on their own, sort of thing.

Regarding this problem over the forest access roads that are not being maintained in the wintertime, have there been any situations where you are working with the municipality and the Ministry of Transportation to have those roads taken over by the municipalities?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure I can answer that question categorically. I am not aware of situations in which the municipalities have taken over responsibility for roads that were once forestry roads, but I think you are raising an issue that is of great concern to the ministry, and that is the whole question of roads that are built essentially to access a forest resource but which then serve other kinds of uses when they are no longer needed for forestry access, and the expectation that is built, both in terms of access and in terms of the maintenance of the road to keep that access available, and the increasing responsibility that falls on the Ministry of Natural Resources to maintain a very large network of roads to a level beyond what the original commitment was in building forest access roads. It is a real challenge for us. It is a mounting concern in terms of both public expectation and our road maintenance capabilities.

Mr Wildman: A very high percentage of them are in unorganized areas.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Exactly.

Mr Pollock: Yes. Well, we have the situation—but I do not want to prolong this.

The Chair: No, I am not going to let you. We can finish next week or tomorrow. We are now going to adjourn and see you all sharp at 3:30 tomorrow.

The committee adjourned at 1803.

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Substitution:

Pollock, Jim (Hastings-Peterborough PC) for Mr Villeneuve

Clerk: Brown, Harold

Staff: Campbell, Elaine, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

Witnesses:

From the Ministry of Natural Resources:
 McLeod, Hon Lyn, Minister of Energy and Minister of Natural Resources (Fort William L)
 Tough, George, Deputy Minister
 Oldford, Gord, Director, Forest Resources Group
 Gordon, Roger, A/ADM—Administration
 Christie, Ron, Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 30 May 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Estimates,
Ministry of Natural Resources

Chair: George R. McCague
Clerk: Harold Brown

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 34^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mercredi 30 mai 1990

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Budget des dépenses,
ministère des Richesses
naturelles

Président : George R. McCague
Secrétaire : Harold Brown



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 30 May 1990

The committee met at 1532 in committee room 2.

ESTIMATES, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)

On vote 2801, ministry administration program:

The Chair: We had agreed to start on time. None of the people who agreed to start on time are in their seats; however, we shall start.

Mr Wiseman: You probably know all of the officials from the ministry. There seems to me to have been quite a change over the last while. For one, I do not know some of the people out in the audience. Perhaps the minister or the deputy would bring us up to date on which officials they have with them today so we can put a handle on who is in what position now.

Mr Tough: If I may start, not in rank order but in location order, I have Ian Crawford, our issues officer, and Monika Turner, who is with the minister's office; John Kerr, director of our financial services branch, and Roger Gordon, our acting assistant deputy minister of administration; Bob Burgar, our ADM, southern Ontario, with whom I know you are acquainted; Lou Lingenfelter, our director of aviation and fire management; Ray Riley, our assistant deputy minister, northern Ontario; Ron Vrancart, the executive director of lands and waters; you know David MacDonald, you were speaking coming in; Ron Christie, the executive director, outdoor recreation; Larry Douglas, the director of our corporate policy and planning secretariat. I believe that is it.

The Chair: Do you have a question?

Mr Wiseman: Are we ready to start?

The Chair: We have already started.

Mr Wiseman: Going back to the statement the minister made the other day on how many fish were deposited into our lakes, rivers and streams, she had a figure of 14 million, I believe, in there. I wonder if she could tell me approximately how many of those went into lakes, rivers and streams in eastern Ontario.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Deputy, you might want to call on Ron Christie, and Ron Christie might want to call for help.

Mr Wiseman: The reason I ask this is that we hear of these 14 million or so, and people in my riding ask me, "How many of those actually came to eastern Ontario?" Perhaps the member for Cornwall is asked that same question. If we had a ballpark figure, it would make it easier for us to tell our constituents that we were getting our fair share of the transfers to the lakes.

Mr Christie: I am Ron Christie, executive director, outdoor recreation. I cannot give you those numbers right now, but I can make a phone call and get them for you rather quickly.

Mr Wiseman: I appreciate that. On the rehabilitation of some of these lakes, I understand that some of our lakes in

eastern Ontario maybe do not require as much rehabilitation as some where the acid rain is heavier and they do not have the rock formation, as we do in our area, that kind of counteracts that. I understand there is a certain rock formation in eastern Ontario where it does not affect them the same way. Could we find out, though, if there is any rehabilitation being done in eastern Ontario as well?

I am interested too in winter fishing. I have had an awful lot of people who have told me that winter fishing seems to deplete our lakes of the fish count more than the summer. Some who are catching the fish and are trying to leave a few for seed have found that they are full of eggs at the time when we still have the fishing open. I was quite pleased with what you did between Carleton Place and Perth, at Innisville, in moving that into a sanctuary for a good portion of the time in the early spring to allow the pickerel to get down into the lake again and not allow people up into the mouth to catch the fish as they are coming down. It just did not seem very sportsmanlike to me to be able to do that.

Still on fish and conservation, I wondered about the conservation officers. There is some talk about the number of conservation officers we have, that perhaps a few more would be a good thing.

The Chair: Mr Christie, are you going to do conservation also?

Mr Wiseman: I was just trying to fit it in. There are two areas of concern. One is the number of officers. Around the lakes, the tourist operators like to see a conservation officer go up and down the lake once in a while, not to fine people but just to say he is on there and check the odd one for regulations. I understand that maybe in the Lanark area we do not have enough people to do this on a regular basis. I think our resort people and other people along the lake would be happy if we did.

The other beef that I think some of the conservation officers have is one that I am sure the minister and the deputy are concerned about and know about, and that is that there is some move afoot to change the title of conservation officers, or whatever, and to take away their right to carry a firearm. I know, over the years that I have lived in Lanark county, that not all the people who hunt are good law-abiding citizens. I remember a chap from Perth, Forest Richardson, was beaten up badly by some hunters out of season, where if he had had some protection for himself, like a firearm, they would not have done that to him.

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Another conservation officer that I know really well, and one of your best, I think, is Bill Bompus. Bill had the same experience with, as we found out later, a couple of Ottawa policemen up hunting on his land who got into mischief and roughed him up quite badly. Those are some of the things that I would like to find out a little more about.

On rabies, I would like to know what your experience has been with your test project of putting out the bait with the vaccine in the meat, whether that was successful or not. My

wife and I were out for a drive on Sunday night and on the way, coming down along Silver Lake, we noticed a rabid fox. I thought by the time I got to a phone goodness knows where it would be. It must have been rabid; it was the worst-looking animal I ever saw. About a couple hundred yards up the river bank was a family fishing, and I just hoped and prayed that it went into the bush instead of up that way.

It seems to be that a lot of my concerns are with this gentleman, Minister. Beaver are another. They are driving people—the member for Cornwall and myself in Lanark-Renfrew—around the bend. Beaver, as we all know, are not worth very much today; I understand about \$8 to \$10 a pelt.

Miss Roberts: You have never bought a sheared beaver coat then.

Mr Wiseman: No. Anyone who has ever been a trapper like myself would not skin a beaver for \$8 to \$10, with the work that has to go into it in order to get it the way the buyers want it prepared today. I think something is going to have to be done: bring in predator control officers to each area, put some sort of a bounty on them or whatever.

I remember a former minister, Leo Bernier, who at one time gave to, I think, Japan a few pair of beaver. Before he left that ministry he was asked how you get rid of the little devils and he could not tell them how to do it at that time either. But I think we are going to have to pay somebody a bounty on them or bring in predator control officers to trap these where they are a nuisance. It is costing townships an awful lot of money to clean out municipal drains, and not only the drains; they are blocking the roadways. If you drive around most of the roads in eastern Ontario, and I am sure in other places, you will see where a backhoe or a big shovel has gone in and actually cleaned out the drains, or the crossings across the roadways, so they can open up and take some of the water away.

The other problem there, as I understood in talking to a planner, is that if a farmer does not get rid of those dams and keep the water flowing, then down the road you people class that as wetland, that it is not very long until it is classed as wetland. We were asking a planner, this friend of mine, "How do you determine where is the wet plan mapping?" He said it has been his experience that once a beaver flood is there for a few years—how many years he did not say—that is classified through the Ministry of Natural Resources as wetland and the farmer better, for his own protection, get rid of that or a third or a good portion of his farm is going to be considered wetland that he or she cannot do anything with.

The other one is again with yourself, sir, the deer population. In one way I am glad to see that the Minister of Natural Resources and, I guess, the Minister of Agriculture have been talking a bit, but as of the last two weeks or so you have put it into the crop insurance and it becomes part of it. But the farmers I have talked to, if you have to cover all your fields for damage done by deer, and it is usually the ones that back on to the bush where you have the problems, then it does not pay the farmer very much. He or she has to put coverage on all the crop for maybe one field, and we all know crop insurance never does pay you very much—maybe for your seed that went in, but it sure as heck does not pay you to buy a crop for the crop you have lost.

Some examples right around in Lanark and part of Renfrew are the apples where we have seen that they just eat the stalk right off. The other is we have seen the corn where they eat the little corn as it starts to develop. You have seen in the stores where you buy that delicacy. Well the deer eat that off, and the

deputy reeve of the township I live in, Mr Coutts, said he was cutting corn in his field and wondered why he was not getting anything off the acres. It was good leaf and good stalk but no ears, and the Chairman would know that it takes a long time to fill a box when it is like that.

We have had people in market gardening where they have eaten it all off. Your people in Carlton Place were trying to be helpful, but they told them to put blood meal all around the outside of the garden and the deer would be scared away. They tried that and it did not work. The chap was really angry. I do not know whether he did what he said he was going to do, but he said if he could not have vegetables in his deep freeze, he would sure as heck have venison.

There are a lot of examples I could give you. The day I asked in the House—Minister, you remember, there was a lady phoning on behalf of herself and her husband. It was just when the new seeding was coming up and she had two new fields that had been reseeded, and we all know the cost of that, anyone who has anything to do with agriculture. She counted 50 deer in two fields.

I would like to recommend that compensation be considered, as I mentioned in the House, getting away from the crop insurance but that compensation be handled similar to what you did when wolves attacked sheep and when bears attacked beehives. People will be thinking that I am against wild animals, but I am not. I think farmers have a right to live and make a living at a time when things are pretty tough for them.

I think too, and I mentioned this to the minister, that perhaps last year was not a good killing year for the hunters. The weather was bad. We did increase the number of the licences, but perhaps the minister would look at increasing that a little bit more. We do not want to ever see it go back to where we were years ago when you might go a whole year and not see a deer. On Sunday night on that same drive, my wife and I counted 12 deer, mostly in doubles, but you never would have done that a few years ago. But you can see, not in real deer country, that many just before dark, and sometimes an awful lot more.

So if some consideration were given to increasing the number of doe licences, I think it would certainly help to bring the count down a bit and perhaps help some of these farmers, market gardeners, apple producers and so on to stay in business.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Mr Chairman, I would like to make some general comments, and I know that Mr Christie will add a number of details. Would you like us to do it issue by issue? I will make some comments on the first issue, then ask Mr Christie to add details and additional information and then go on to the next issue Mr Wiseman raised.

The Chair: Whatever the minister says.

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Hon Mrs McLeod: I guess the first issue you raised was the question of fisheries. I will ask Mr Christie for some specific information in terms of the eastern Ontario stocking and also rehabilitation. If he does not have it at his fingertips, I suspect he will offer to provide it for you at a later session. You were also raising a concern about winter fishing and Mr Christie might want to comment about that.

The only comment I would make is that I am extremely impressed with the amount of effort that in each region, in each district in fact, goes into looking at the protection of the fishery and whether we have to make changes, in the nature of our seasons, in order to protect the fishery in particular lakes. It really is a lake-by-lake assessment.

I suppose there is that constant challenge of finding the balance between what is necessary in order to protect the fishery in terms of an alteration of the season or the actual closure of some lakes and what we want to do in order to support recreational fishing in the province. We struggle to find that balance, but there certainly is a great deal of intensive assessment that goes on.

Mr Wiseman: My main concern there was that a lot of the fish in the winter are full of eggs and we let it go on a little too long. I think most sport fishermen would agree with that. I think we should cut it off a bit earlier. I guess it depends on the weather and one thing or another when they have all these eggs. I think it should be played by ear. We should try to cut it off so we save those females from being caught. They are pretty to catch, I guess, when they are full of eggs.

Mr Christie: I will add a little bit with respect to the winter fishing question. As the minister says, we do a lot of work carrying out assessment to determine just what is being harvested out of various bodies of water. We adjust the seasons to take into account the fish that are taken year-round in any lake.

We found that the winter fishery is largely residents of Ontario—the ones who take part in that fishery. In the summer fishery we have residents, but we also have an awful lot of visitors. The minister talked about balance. We were trying to balance the needs of the fishermen compared to the capability of the resources to sustain the fishery. We are also looking at developing that balance between the various kinds of fishermen, fisherpeople.

Mr Wildman: Fishers.

Mr Christie: Thank you, fishers. I was a having a little difficulty with that. In some areas where we have had problems with excessive fishing pressure on lakes, particularly in the winter season, we have shortened the winter season, as you have said, to cut back in the late spring so that those fish that are full of eggs have a chance to spawn. Looking at the balance over the year, it is our belief that we are able to strike that balance and maintain both fisheries. In those situations where we cannot do it, we take action to ensure that the fish stocks are able to sustain themselves.

If you can give me some specific areas in eastern Ontario that are of concern to you, we can get the detailed information, but I am not aware of any fisheries in that part of the province that are really overstressed, where we are really concerned about the possibility of losing some of those fish stocks. We are able to keep the lid on it.

You also mentioned the question of rehabilitation with respect to acid rain in eastern Ontario. You also said that there are special rock formations there that make it much easier, and that is the limestone. I think we have found generally that eastern Ontario is not one of the major problem areas with respect to acid deposition, so there are not many acid-stressed lakes in that part of the province. With those that have been identified, over time we will be looking at ways and means of conducting some rehabilitation.

In those areas where acid stress is a problem, given the cutbacks in SO₂ emissions from a number of sources, we are finding that the acidic level in those lakes is actually dropping. In other words, the lakes are returning more to a normal state by themselves and a number of them are able now to sustain fish populations.

Mr Wiseman: Could I just ask a question on that?

The Chair: Mr Wiseman, I am going to cut you both off with replies and questions at four o'clock, so maybe you should wait for the answers and then see if there is time.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Perhaps I should alter the strategy I was suggesting, make some general comments on the other three areas you raised and see if Mr Christie would like to add anything. You did raise the question of conservation officers and whether there is any indication that we would be moving to either a change in name or to elimination of the conservation officers carrying guns.

I was trying to think where that kind of thought might have arisen. I suspect it relates back to what had been an ongoing discussion with conservation officers in relation to their role description. That is an issue that has now been resolved. It did focus in large measure on the role of enforcement in the role description of the conservation officers. There may have been a lot of ideas we were not pursuing that somehow became attached to that discussion that was going on. Quite clearly, in the role description we recognize that enforcement is an important part of the work of our conservation officers and will continue to be an important part of their work.

You asked about beaver control and predator control, which as I travel around the province is a growing concern. We have moved to enforce the non-payment of bounties, as I am sure you are aware, because we recognize that this is not the best method of controlling predators. We would work with each of the municipal areas in order to provide a different program. Of course, the foundation for that program is intended to be working with trappers who could carry out predator control. I think you are quite right that the bottom has literally fallen out of the fur market. The trappers are saying to us, "There is not a lot of incentive for us to join with you in a predator control program when we cannot get any value for the pelts."

There is at least one district I am aware of in the northwestern part of the province where they are looking at a trapper predator control program, but are looking at whether or not some payment to the trappers would need to be made in order to have them involved with us, with the municipalities and with the private land owners.

We have talked about the deer population, and as you know we share your concern both in terms of its impact on farmers and also on the destruction of the Carolinian forest in the eastern part of the province. We are increasingly using controlled hunts as a means of dealing with the overpopulation. Perhaps in the interest of time I will stop there and let Mr Christie add some details or you ask some further questions.

Mr Christie: I do not think I have any more details to add to the minister's response.

Mr Wiseman: Rabies.

Mr Christie: Rabies; okay. We consider the program in eastern Ontario last year successful to the extent that we were able to develop the technology to, first of all, produce that number of baits, and second, were able to deliver those baits to the areas where they needed to be deposited. We found that of the foxes that ate the baits, about 50% of them were in fact inoculated with the rabies vaccine. That was a little bit lower than we would normally have expected. We conducted some trials in the ravine areas of Metropolitan Toronto last year by hand-placing baits out and then picking them up after the test was over. In that situation, the foxes that took up the baits, we found we had an 80% inoculation rate.

As to the difference, we do not know. We are going to be doing some tests this year to determine why there was such a difference between the eastern Ontario experiment and what was done in the ravine areas of Metro Toronto. Everything seems to be working, but we just do not understand why we had that difference and we are going to be examining why.

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Mr Wildman: As I understand, Mr Chair, we are staying on the first vote and we can cover the waterfront, as it were.

The Chair: It is a scattergun.

Mr Wildman: Well, I hope it is not a scattergun. On page 14 of the briefing book there is a reference to the review and follow-up to the recommendations of the Canada Consulting Cresap report, and "redefined its vision for the 1990s" for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Further on, "Changes associated with the strategic vision, the organizational review and the information technology strategic plan will be a stimulus to the ministry's strategies for renewal and employment equity plans."

Now, we talked a little yesterday about information technology. I do not want to take a lot of time on this because there are a lot of other matters that I want to raise. Could the minister give us some idea of what this redefined vision for the 1990s is and where she is at with regard to responding to the recommendations of the consultant's report.

Hon Mrs McLeod: On the first question, without perhaps putting it under that heading of the redefined vision, I was talking about the strategic directions for the ministry in my opening comments yesterday. The strategic directions that we have identified are a commitment to sustainable development, a recognition of the importance of information, and in support of that the development of partnerships and the valuing of the resources. Those are the essential components of the strategic directions.

In terms of the reorganization, there has been a consultant's report, quite clearly. That is being considered very thoroughly within the ministry and with each of the areas of the ministry. There has not been a final set of recommendations presented to me. Because of that I am going to ask the deputy to make any further comments on it.

Mr Tough: Would you like me to say anything at this time, Mr Wildman, or do you want a specific—

Mr Wildman: If you could, yes, because I have a number of other issues. As I said, I do not want to spend a lot of time on this because there are a number of resource management issues I would like to deal with.

Mr Tough: As Mr Wildman knows, we have had a steering committee in the ministry, chaired by Mr Bugar, which is doing a great deal of work over a great number of months and we have had a number of discussions with Mr Bugar's committee. I have sent, I believe, two updates to our staff in the ministry giving them some indication of the direction of our thinking in terms of the best bets that were identified by the consultants. The staff in the various components of the ministry are aware of those best bets. They know that we are working on the issue and that we are proceeding towards a set of recommendations for the minister's consideration and for approval by the central agencies.

Mr Wildman: I do not want to get into the employment equity plan. It is not that I do not understand the importance of that, but we do not have a lot of time. I just wonder if there are

plans or consideration being given with regard to organizational review that will affect the current decentralized nature of the ministry. Will there be possibilities, for instance, for consolidation of districts, cutting the number of districts and that sort of thing, so that while the ministry would remain a decentralized operation, perhaps within that there will be more centralization within the various regional offices?

Mr Tough: If I can continue, since we have not gone into detail with the minister on this, I believe that in the first update I sent to the staff—I was hoping that others would read it as well—we said that one of the tenets of this exercise was to maintain a presence in the communities we now serve. We do not intend this as a centralizing exercise. I guess, Mr Wildman, we feel even more strongly than we did when we began the exercise that we have to, if anything, upgrade our field presence right out there on the cutting edge of resource management.

Mr Wildman: As it were.

Mr Tough: As it were.

Hon Mrs McLeod: And as it is and will be. The focus, obviously, of the reorganization has to be to be as effective as possible in delivering the service. I think it would be virtually impossible to effectively deliver resource management programs without having a strong decentralized presence.

Mr Wildman: I mentioned yesterday, or at least one of my colleagues mentioned, zebra mussels and there was a question about expenditures, which was not included in the minister's opening remarks. Would it be possible at some time before the end of the estimates review by the committee to get some figures as to how much the provincial government is budgeting for rehabilitation, and if possible, research for eradication, and compare that with how much is being budgeted by the United States Congress? There are proposals before the US Congress right now. There are also proposals, I understand, in the Ohio state Legislature and also in the Michigan state Legislature.

I have the impression, and I hope it is incorrect, that there is more urgency and more commitment in terms of financial resources on the part of our American neighbours with regard to this serious problem in the Great Lakes, which may spread to interior lakes. I hope it does not, but it is quite possible. I do not expect you to have those figures now, but I would like to get them, if possible. While I appreciate the information and publicity being given to try to make boaters and outdoorsmen and people in the tourist industry aware of the problems and the danger and what they should be doing—I think that is very important—I think we also have to try, at least on a proportional basis, to match the commitment being made by the Americans to try to deal with this problem. I understand that the federal government, I would hope, would be involved as well.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The difficulty I think we would have in producing the kind of figure that would give you a comparison of what is happening in Ontario in comparison to any other jurisdiction is that at the present time the focus on actual expenditures for research and for involvement in the zebra mussel problem has been in different ministries. For example, I think within the Ministry of Natural Resources we would be able to perhaps determine a component of staff time that has been devoted to the zebra mussel problem and also perhaps a component of information, a cost for information. The Ministry of the Environment actually would have a much more substantial budget in terms of the research that has been funded.

Mr Wildman: Ontario Hydro has a budget for it.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Ontario Hydro has a large budget. What we are trying to do with our interministerial committee is to bring together the ministries that have been focusing on the zebra mussel problem so that we get a co-ordinated approach from government. We expect that interministerial committee will make a funding submission as it recognizes the need for additional resources, but that funding submission has not yet been made.

Mr Wildman: All right. Do you have an idea when that might happen?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think fairly imminently.

Mr Wildman: I raise that with regard to the fact that in another committee of this House your parliamentary assistant, the honourable member for Huron, Jack Riddell, had indicated he was involved in a committee with regard to zebra mussels. Is that the interministerial committee to which you are referring?

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Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. There is an interministerial committee at the political level, essentially of parliamentary assistants from each of the ministries that have an involvement with zebra mussels. There is also a technical advisory committee that is interministerial which is doing the support for the committee of parliamentary assistants.

Mr Wildman: I am sorry to see—and I am not going to be cute about this—that Jack is not here, because I was hoping he might be able to participate in that discussion.

I mentioned the Indian fishing agreement and we had a response on that, but in the meantime, while I suspect this is going to be a long-term process of negotiating co-management, if we ever get to that point, I understand the ministry has a policy of leniency of enforcement, shall we say, with regard to treaty Indians exercising what they understand to be their treaty rights. Is that correct? Maybe you do not want to say it is if it is, but if it is correct, then I have a specific instance I would like to raise as an example of the problems that can arise on both sides of the issue.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is my understanding, and I would certainly invite staff from the ministry to correct any misstatement I might make in this regard, that our conservation officers would recognize the treaty right, and I am almost hesitant to use that term as being the right term to describe it, but the traditional rights of access of aboriginal people to hunting and fishing for personal consumption and that that would be the basis on which they would not enforce the normal fish and game laws.

Mr Wildman: That is right. I am not referring to the Greg Agawa case, although I could if you wish, but in two first nations in my constituency the chiefs have raised this issue with me, and they have raised it, I think, in a very co-operative sense. For instance, Chief Douglas Daybutch of the Mississauga first nation has pointed out to me that his people traditionally fish at this time of year near the chutes on the Mississagi River near Blind River on the reserve or on what the band considers to be reserve land. There may be a land claim dispute in that area. As I understand it, the ministry has taken the position that if they fish off the other bank away from the road, okay.

But the chief of the Garden River first nation, Dennis Jones, recently talked to me about fishing near the mouth of the Echo River. One side of the river is reserve, the other side is not. He has said to me that he is prepared to meet with MNR to talk

about how perhaps the members of his first nation could exercise what they understand to be their right, but do it in a way as not to raise the hackles of non-Indians in the area, because he understands the issue. I am just wondering if the ministry is open to those kinds of discussions with responsible chiefs and councils from the first nations in this province.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the generic answer to the question is yes, that the Ministry of Natural Resources is interested—

Mr Wildman: I am not asking you specifically in the two cases.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, we are amenable to sitting down and discussing with the aboriginal people both their traditional access to fishing and hunting as well as a number of other questions that go beyond that in terms of their participation in the use of our natural resources. I am not sure if the deputy wanted to add something more specific about individual cases.

Mr Tough: I think Mr Wildman does not want to get specific, but I just wanted to mention that I was at a meeting in Sault Ste Marie with Chief Bell of the Batchewana band and Chief Jones was there from the Garden River band. We did agree that there were some problems and that we ought to be talking about them. We are certainly receptive to talking to them.

Mr Wildman: In that regard, and in another matter—I will not go on at length—Chief Jones did indeed want to meet with the minister. He eventually ended up meeting with a member of your staff last Friday. He commented that he appreciated that meeting and he thought it was positive, but he wondered what it took to get a meeting with the minister or the deputy. Did it take a demonstration such as the Batchewana first nation did where it picketed the local office before the deputy goes up for a meeting?

Hon Mrs McLeod: We prefer to meet before the demonstration.

Mr Wildman: So would he. That is why he was wondering why it was so difficult to arrange a meeting.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is usually purely a matter of time in the schedule.

Mr Wildman: I would like to go on with another couple of questions about the fishery. There are also some figures I would like to get. I would like to know how much is being spent—it may be in here already and I may have missed it—on the community fisheries involvement program. How does it compare with last year and the year before?

Mr Christie: CFIP for this year is set at \$700,000. Last year it was \$500,000.

Mr Wildman: Along those lines as well, you sent me information with regard to the revenue from the fishing licence and expenditures, because I had used as an example the Wawa district Ministry of Natural Resources. You indicated that revenue generated in the Wawa district was \$31,000 in 1989. The revenue over two years, 1988 to 1990, was \$75,400 and \$81,000 respectively. My friend from eastern Ontario may be interested in this. Is this an aberration or is it normal that we have basically more than double being spent in areas like the Wawa district over what is collected from the sale of licences?

Hon Mrs McLeod: The question is really one of money and the allocation with respect to dollars.

Mr Christie: The priority is for the expenditure of the funds, determined at a level beyond the district level, usually at the regional level, and the field assistant deputy ministers make those judgements among regions. The projects that are carried out will vary from district to district and from year to year. It may well be that Wawa district, over a two- or three-year period, will receive a significant amount of money because of the very real need.

Mr Wildman: I am not complaining.

Mr Christie: Next year that may well change. The money is directed to where the priority needs are.

Mr Wildman: In other words, how many applications you have?

Mr Christie: No. Are you talking about CFIP?

Mr Wildman: No, I am talking about all together, whether it be ministry programs themselves or CFIP, or is it based on how stressed or under how much pressure the fishery is in a particular region?

Mr Christie: Again, it varies depending on the needs of the resource within the area you are talking about. With CFIP it is based on applications and we take them in priority order.

Mr Wildman: If we compare page 55 to page 93 in the briefing book, you will see that in the fisheries management expenditures estimate, the interim actual expenditure for 1989-90 is \$51.5 million. Is that right?

Mr Christie: Yes.

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Mr Wildman: The estimate is \$52 million. Then you look at page 93, "Statement of Revenue," and it goes from \$9.7 million to \$10.9 million. Why the discrepancy?

Mr Christie: This is revenue, and the revenue is increasing this current year because of the increase in the fees.

Mr Wildman: Okay, fine. Why are your expenditures not going up by the same amount?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think, if I may, the questions were meant to be to the total fisheries budget and whether or not we would have expected to see incorporated in the total fisheries budget both the full increase from the resident sport fishing licences and some further increase in the overall budget.

Mr Wildman: That is right.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think what you see is an increase in the fisheries budget that reflects the increase in the revenue from the resident sport fishing licence and a total budget which reflects a degree of constraint which is applied to all of our department budgets.

Mr Wildman: Aye, there is the rub.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is the answer to the question you are asking.

Mr Wildman: When this was brought about by the former minister, he made a commitment to the sport fishermen of this province that in fact the revenue from the sport fishing licence would be used for increasing stocking and improving fish habitat in this province and that it would not result in less

money being spent under the ministry's former normal programs, that that would continue to increase as it had in the past and that the sport fishing revenues would not in any way subsidize the fisheries management expenditures of this ministry.

Hon Mrs McLeod: That is correct, and that is exactly what is incorporated in this budget. What you will find is that the overall budget of the fisheries branch, as all branches of the ministry, has accepted a portion of the constraint which we as a corporate ministry have accepted responsibility for. You will find that the overall base budget in 1989-90 was \$39.8 million, this year it is \$41.5 million, and added to that is the full amount of the resident sport fishing licence revenue. The entire amount, including the increase of the resident sport licences, goes into the fisheries budget. The fisheries budget is not constrained to a greater degree than any other branch. It receives the same proportionate increases any other branch of our ministry would and then receives the augmentation of the increase in revenues from the sport fishing licence.

Mr Wildman: And none of that money is going to help hire conservation officers?

Mr MacDonald: I am sorry, is your question whether no sport fishing licence money goes to hire conservation officers?

Mr Wildman: Quite right, that was the question.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I believe there were 13 new conservation officers hired—not in this year's estimates, in a past year's budget.

Mr Wildman: All right. The fact is that the conservation officers, whom we need and who do a very important job in this province, do more than just enforce the fishing regulations. They enforce the hunting regulations, the parking regulations and so on. So in fact, in the past the revenue from the sport fishing licence has been used to subsidize other operations of this ministry? Okay.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In order to determine that, I think you would almost have to look at how you would attribute the full cost of conservation officers across branches of the ministry with whom the conservation officers are involved and then attempt to determine what proportion of the conservation officers' overall work is involved in fisheries enforcement as opposed to other areas of the conservation officers' work. Then you would have to find a balance between the work that the conservation officers do in resource management and the work they actually do in enforcement. It would be a very difficult figure to determine, whether or not the resident sport fishing licences were subsidizing conservation officers who are doing work in wildlife management or enforcement, for example.

Mr Wildman: I understand the argument, but you will not have that difficulty this year because you are not using the money to hire conservation officers.

Can I move from there to another matter with regard to the fisheries review that is being carried on right now? I wrote a letter to the minister recently about the people who are invited to the open houses and information sessions with regard to the fisheries review. I gave a couple of examples, and I mentioned it yesterday.

For instance, in one area the Lake Erie Salmon and Trout Club of Port Stanley, which represents anglers in the area, was invited to participate, as it should have been, but the Elgin Fishermen's Association of Port Stanley, which represents com-

mercial fishermen in the region, was not invited. The townships of Yarmouth and Southwold, which have no direct interest in the commercial fishery, were invited to participate, but the village of Port Stanley, where the local Lake Erie fishing fleet is centred, was not invited, nor was the village of Port Burwell, where many of the commercial fishermen live.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure whether there were inadvertent omissions from the invitation list in certain areas that we can follow up on, and your letter will obviously direct those issues to our concern, but the intent of the review that Mr Riddell is carrying out is certainly premised upon consulting with all licensed commercial fishermen in the areas that he is visiting.

I have information on the meetings in Lake Huron, in which the lake manager sent a letter to all licensed commercial fishermen asking them for written comments or briefs. In Sault Ste Marie representatives of commercial fishermen as well as representatives of Indian people, anglers and hunters and tourist outfitters were invited, and letters were also sent to all licensed commercial fishermen inviting their written comments. There may be a question of how many people are invited to come to a meeting rather than being invited to submit written comment, but certainly the intent is to ensure that we have heard the views of all of the people concerned with the fisheries issue in relationship to commercial fishing, and that would include all of our licensed commercial fishermen.

Mr Wildman: Okay. Could I deal with a question of wildlife management. Can you tell me how much money is being spent this year on non-game species management?

Mr Christie: No, I cannot specifically. I can get that figure for you.

Mr Wildman: How many staff do you have working in non-game species management? I would like to compare that with the fact that you have staff specifically set out for game species management: moose, bear, deer, game birds.

The minister mentioned predator control. I understand there is a real problem in some parts of the province now with a sort of a crossbreed of a coyote and dog, and I understand the argument made by the minister with regard to bounties. I think the term she used was "enforcing the non-payment of bounties," which is an interesting way of putting it, but could we find out what is being done with regard to dealing with this problem, if it is indeed a major problem for farmers and others in the province?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Are we talking about the coyote-dog? There is also a growing wolf problem, at least in the northwestern part of the province. It certainly goes beyond the beavers.

Miss Roberts: We have the next hour, right?

The Chair: Yes. I am not trying to take up too much time.

Hon Mrs McLeod: In Renfrew county, they insist the coyote-dog is actually a wolf.

The Chair: You are on the verge of having 60 minutes left, 10 of which you are not likely to get and nobody is going to get, so you are about to about 50 if we are going to finish next Tuesday.

1630

Mr Wildman: We could start 10 minutes early.

The Chair: I can start at 1:30, if you like.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Was there a specific response, though, that you wanted to them?

Mr Wildman: Maybe you can give me those figures. If you can give the answers to the questions I raised, in writing, that would be fine.

With regard to the control on the numbers of deer in certain areas, I noticed that the minister said, in response to my friend the member for Lanark-Renfrew, that the controlled hunt is most often used. I know there has been a serious controversy at Rondeau with regard to the control of deer. An interested group has contacted Dr John Turner of the medical school of Ohio and Dr J Kirkpatrick of Eastern Montana College with regard to the studies of steroid use for control of various types of species, first on horses and then subsequently the proposal for deer in controlled areas and enclosed areas on islands or peninsulas and so on, and the suggestion that there might in fact be a pilot project at Rondeau since it might fit the bill. What has the Ministry of Natural Resources done in response to those proposals?

Mr Christie: We have reviewed the literature. We have also talked to specialists. I cannot tell you whether they were those specific individuals that you mentioned or not.

Mr Wildman: They are the experts, I understand.

Mr Christie: There are others around as well. The conclusion that we have come to thus far is that, in a wild situation, those kinds of methodologies do not work.

Mr Wildman: Yes, but Rondeau is not a wild situation, is it?

Mr Christie: It is an enclosed situation, but the deer are wild.

Mr Wildman: But they are used to humans.

Mr Christie: To some extent. But again, with those sorts of population levels, the data and all of the literature indicate that the methodology does not work.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is probably fair to say that we need to examine all possible ways of dealing with the continuation of this problem or its development in the future. Unfortunately, we have an immediate problem in the solution of birth control. Many of the respondents are concerned about our proposal for a cull at Rondeau Provincial Park. It does not work retroactively and we still have an immediate problem that we have to deal with there.

Mr Wildman: Sure, I understand.

The other question that I want to raise, and I will then yield the floor so that we can deal with forestry next week, is in regard to one that I raised earlier about road maintenance.

If you look at pages 45 and 49, I asked yesterday if someone could get me figures in constant dollars. If you look at page 50, for instance, it gives the numbers of kilometres of road for construction and maintenance for 1987 and 1990. I would like to know what that means in constant dollars.

Mr Vrancart: I am Ron Vrancart, executive director of the lands and waters group. Mr Wildman did ask at the end of the day yesterday if I could produce this information. I have just a few minutes ago received it from my staff and I am sorry to report that I only have two copies. If I may pass one to Mr

Wildman, it may help me explain the situation. I will get additional copies.

Immediately when you have a look at the two charts which have now been reconstructed in terms of dollars of expenditure in 1985 constant dollars, you will see that the construction-reconstruction has varied around the \$10-million mark, while at the same time the maintenance expenditure in 1985 constant dollars has remained almost constant at the \$2-million level. That is for the maintenance of access roads.

Mr Wildman: Yes, slightly higher in 1987 than in 1990.

Mr Vrancart: Yes.

Mr Wildman: And a significant cut in the construction-reconstruction of bridges?

Mr Vrancart: Yes, that is true. It has dropped from about \$1.7 million in 1987 to about \$700,000, in 1985 dollars, in 1990.

Mr Wildman: In essence, that means that in most cases the roads are closed.

Mr Vrancart: No, we have not in fact closed any roads. There are some local exceptions to that, of course.

Mr Wildman: I can name a few.

Mr Vrancart: Our problem is that we have an expanding inventory of roads. This ministry is responsible for the management of 35,000 kilometres of resource access roads, which is about two and a half times the size of the provincial highway system, so our inventory of roads is actually growing. In the past two years, it has grown from 32,000 kilometres to 35,000 kilometres, while there are certain local situations where we have in fact had to close roads.

Mr Wildman: In other areas you are not closing roads but you are no longer maintaining them. I understand your problem, but these are roads that in the past the ministry has maintained. Now the ministry is no longer maintaining them, so they become impassable.

In other areas, you have indeed closed roads. I do not want to dwell on what you say are exceptions, but if they are exceptions, why is it, in the five districts in my riding, I have examples in every district, particularly the Blind River district? There is an extreme example, where they have 63 different access points and they are only maintaining access to those access points in about five of them. These are ministry access points to lakes. We are not just talking about forest access roads where roads were built to access forest harvesting. We are talking about roads that lead to access points on lakes, that were installed by the ministry in years past for boaters and people who want to go fishing. They are no longer being maintained.

The ministry does not have the money. That district does not have the money. A decision has been made that they do not have the money for it. So what does this do to tourism in that area?

I pose the question that I posed before: If this ministry does not have the money, who is going to do it? If this government has a commitment to tourism, accessible wilderness in northern Ontario—

Hon Mrs McLeod: I was actually going to do something that might be a bit revolutionary at estimates. Until you posed the question, I was going to ask it, in turn, because I do not think that we would do anything other than recognize the challenges of trying to do adequate maintenance on 35,000

kilometres of roads. I think I mentioned that in response to concerns that Mr Pollock raised yesterday, that as we have increasing numbers of access roads and people using those roads, the expectations for maintenance at a higher level than was ever originally intended become greater and greater, and that adds to the stresses on our ability to maintain the roads.

I think there do have to be some answers, other than the fact that I am not sure we would find something else in our budget that is less important to do. That would involve a reprioritizing, if we can bring that word out again. Obviously, each ministry struggles each year to set its priorities.

Mr Wildman: I will just close off by saying that I understand that in some areas you have the forest access roads that lead close to the vicinity of lakes where you have outpost camps. The outpost camp is paying for an outpost camp permit. That leads to conflict between local sportsmen who wish to go in and fish and have access and the tourist out there.

That is a difficult one. I understand it. But in the White Lake area, for instance, in the Wawa district, this ministry took out bridges. They did not put in culverts; they just took out the bridges, when in fact in that particular case the tourist outfitter wanted the bridges. When you take out a bridge and you do not put in a culvert, unless someone has an amphibious vehicle, you have in essence closed the road.

1640

Hon Mrs McLeod: I do not think anybody would argue with that. I think the problem is one of having the resources to maintain the roads to a level of safety which allows them to remain open.

Mr Wildman: Exactly. The question is, if you do not have the money, who has it? If nobody has it, are we going to say to the people in the north, "We have a policy of not maintaining roads," and make it a public policy so that everybody understands the exact situation?

Mr Tough: The only point I would make, and not to disagree with Mr Wildman, is that there will never be enough money to do everything we want on that 35,000-kilometre network. I think increasingly we are going to have to work in concert with the people in the areas and the people who are affected to determine better than perhaps we have been able to do in the past, in terms of local volume, the priorities of those roads, because I think we would argue that not all of them can be kept open, not all of those bridges can be kept safe, and even where there is not a case of conflict, it may be that we are not able to provide the funds necessary to keep them all open. The question is then, with the funds that are available, how do we prioritize those bridges and roads and that sort of thing? I think it is fair to say that we ought to be reaching out more to get a consensus on those issues.

Mr Wildman: My time has run out, so I will close. I would appreciate it if you could give me the figures I have asked for from the various areas.

The Chair: We can allow the next 40 minutes to the Liberal Party, with one or more questioners.

Mr Cleary: I guess we have had a good discussion on beavers already today, so I will not spend time on that, because every problem that we have heard here today we have in eastern Ontario.

The other thing that I would like to talk about is that we have some surplus land that is owned by the Ministry of Natural

Resources in eastern Ontario. I guess we have people interested in purchasing that land and leaving it in the same zoning on the official plan. I would just like to know what our policy is on that land.

The other thing is that we have licensed gravel pits. A lot of them are closed out, landscaped, and I would like to know what our policy is on entering into a forestry agreement on those lands and having them replanted under programs like we have in eastern Ontario.

I have a few other things here that have kind of been bothering me for some time.

The Chair: I wonder if it would be better if we get the answer as you do each one.

Mr Cleary: Okay.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The first agreement on rehabilitated former pits or quarries—I assume those are on private lands.

Mr Cleary: Right.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We do have a private lands forestry policy in which we can assist private land owners with reforestation. There is also a managed forest land tax rebate program. So I would think it would be possible for a private land owner who has land that he would like to reforest to talk with our district office and determine just what could be done to assist him in bringing about a managed forest area on his land.

I am not sure whether anyone wants to add to that.

Mr Burgar: Bob Burgar, assistant deputy minister, southern Ontario. The minister is referring to the Woodlands Improvement Act agreement that we could reach with any land owner, and that is quite available. It is certainly available for former gravel pits, the same way as it is for any other land owner, to do the planting, to do the management of any forest that is there or that could be put there. So that is quite available.

Mr Cleary: I have been asked that a number of times. I was never able to get any answer and they seemed to have had a hard time getting answers. That is why I was asking it today.

Mr Burgar: Any district office would be glad to go and look at a piece of property and enter into an agreement.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Your first question was on surplus crown land, I believe.

Mr Cleary: Owned by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think we would probably need some specific information about the particular parcel of land. If there is crown land managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, owned by the province, which could be considered for development purposes, there are methods of disposing of crown land at market value. But I think, Mr Burgar, we would need to have specific information about the particular parcel of land and the use which was proposed.

Mr Burgar: There is the other piece of property down there—land that was assembled; the Edwardsburgh land assembly, I believe—which MNR is managing. The title is held by the Ministry of Government Services. Is that the property you are referring to?

Mr Cleary: Not really. In the eastern part of my riding, in Charlottenburgh township, I was referring to some land on the north side of Highway 2. It did not seem to have changed any for a lot of years, and I just wondered why we were the owners.

Mr Burgar: If you give me the specific location, then I can get a specific answer for that.

Mr Cleary: There is no problem there.

One thing that I have a problem with goes back a number of years, but I will start in 1986, when three gentlemen bought a property on the waterfront east of Cornwall. When they purchased that property and surveyed it, there was no land claim by the ministry or registered on purchase until a lady broke her ankle on the property. The people who thought they owned it started fixing the land to prevent a further accident and it cost them around \$3,000. They were stopped two days later by the ministry because it considered the work was being done on crown land.

On 2 August 1989 they received a letter from the ministry informing them that the land in question must be purchased or leased, no costs given by the ministry because it was in the process of appraisal and would get back; asked the question on liability on the property and there was no reply. They received a survey from the ministry, a letter dated 2 August 1989. The survey was dated 24 August 1981 and not registered.

On 25 May 1990 they were still not hearing from the ministry about the liability and cost. This is the writer's letter, "At the same time, I was told they did not know as yet, but we would receive it at any time." On 29 May, returned to the ministry an appraisal. New cost to purchase land is \$34,000.

I am going to give you some dates here. The owner contacted the municipality in August 1989 and was told that they pay the taxes to the river's edge. The land is landlocked, with no access. There was no fill added by the present owner. The previous owner, in 1980, admits fill was added, but not at her request. A contractor was hired to install a breakwall and it is still in need of repair. The contractor who did the installation at the time was a municipal reeve. "I was never approached by the ministry until July 1989. I was also aware that an application was filed to purchase the land in 1981." These people have got themselves into such a bind right now that they are going to put the place up for sale over that land. I have a couple of surveys here that they were given.

1650

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the best thing we could do is undertake to pursue the issue in terms of the information that you have there, Mr Cleary, and I am sure the assistant deputy for southern Ontario will look into that.

Mr Cleary: These people are right on to me about it and if I do not do something, they are going to put the property up for sale. I would not like to see that happen.

Hon Mrs McLeod: If you can share that information with us in the written form, that would help us to pursue it.

Mr Cleary: The other thing is that I meet with some quarry operators, some of them come in to see me, and I am just going to read what they tell me. They feel that municipalities do not understand the Pits and Quarries Control Act or the wetland policy.

"Officials appear before council to explain either one." I am just reading it the way it is here and they say that the Ministry of Natural Resources does not get involved in it. Anyway, it is quite a problem down our way there, either with existing quarries or with operators who want to open a sand pit or something. We have a few deposits close to the city of Cornwall that are in the wetlands and they want to take the sand out of the

wetlands and they are having all kinds of problems. They asked me to bring that up.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You will recognize that with the new Aggregate Resources Act, in the estimates that are shown in relationship to our lands and waters budget, we will be increasing our resources to implement the new Aggregate Resources Act so that we will be able to deal fairly expeditiously with the applications that people make for new pits or quarries.

In terms of the wetlands and the issue of quarry deposits on wetlands, quite clearly, any application for a new pit or quarry would have to be examined in relationship to provincial wetland policy which, although it is not yet firm, represents a guideline we are very conscious of. But we do have an act, the Aggregate Resources Act, which clearly sets out our approach to dealing with applications. We will be implementing it with additional resources so that we can deal with the concerns of applicants and also people from the municipalities and residents. We do have a draft policy on wetlands which can serve as a guideline in reviewing the applications.

Mr Cleary: Okay, thank you.

Miss Roberts: I will ask a couple of questions and then my fellow members have some other questions as well.

I would like to talk about the commercial fishing and I would like to explain to my honourable friend that indeed those concerns you had were brought directly to the regional manager at Port Burwell. There is one fisherman who fishes out of there and we would love to have more commercial fishermen out of there, so anyone you know who would like to come down to Port Burwell, please send him.

But with the commercial fishing review that is going on right now, do you have a time frame as to when that is going to be completed?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think Mr Riddell is hoping to be able to report by the end of this month if he is able to meet that time frame.

Miss Roberts: That is tomorrow.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Is it still only May? I was sure it had slipped into June. By the end of June.

Miss Roberts: So it will be by the end of June. The review that is being done has been travelling throughout the whole province. I think the major place where commercial fishing still exists is in Lake Erie. The largest proportion is in Lake Erie, outside the first nations, who do some commercial fishing as well. I know it is the strategic plan for Ontario fisheries or something. You have a group of people who are getting together and looking at fishing throughout the entire province. Could you give us some more information about that particular policymaking umbrella group, who belongs to it, what its mandate is, what its funding is and when it is going to be reporting from time to time?

Mr Wildman: Far be it from us to stop at SPOF.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Especially SPOF 2.

Miss Roberts: SPOF 2, yes.

Hon Mrs McLeod: As Mr Christie comes up to assist us, SPOF 2 is the strategic plan for Ontario fisheries. I will ask Mr Christie, although I am sure it is in my briefing notes somewhere. The membership of the SPOF committee is a broad guideline for fishing in Ontario. It sets out the guidelines within

which fisheries management, whether for recreational fishery or commercial fishery, would be carried out.

The commercial fishery review that Mr Riddell is undertaking would certainly have to be consistent with the guidelines of our strategic plan for Ontario fisheries but would deal with much more specific issues of commercial fisheries. The type of fishing that is done through the commercial fisheries, the whole question of quotas and the question of royalties are the specific issues he is examining in that review. It is not in any way inconsistent or duplicating the SPOF review, which is a more general guideline and which is currently out for very intensive consultation with a number of different groups. For details of that, we have Mr Christie.

Miss Roberts: Yes, that is what I would like to key in on, if I might, that it is out for consultation, what groups you are talking to and who are the members.

Mr Christie: There is no committee per se. We think we have covered virtually every group in the province which has an interest in fisheries.

Miss Roberts: You are using the royal "we"?

Mr Christie: The ministry.

Miss Roberts: I would like to know who in the ministry. I want to know the people who are responsible for this. I want to know the people who are involved in it. If there is no committee per se, I want to know who is in charge and what relationship they have to the various groups that are going to be involved, or are there just ministry people?

Mr Christie: The person in charge of the SPOF process is George Whitney. He just left us as director of fisheries branch. He is carrying on though and finishing off the SPOF planning exercise.

Miss Roberts: Is he doing it all on his own and just calling in people from time to time?

Mr Christie: No, it is a planned process.

Miss Roberts: Okay, let's hear what it is.

Mr Christie: We began consultations with a number of sister ministries about a year and a half ago.

Miss Roberts: Which were the ministries? Just be as concise as you can as quickly as you can. I will not hold you to them.

Mr Christie: The ministries of the Environment, Agriculture and Food, Municipal Affairs, Housing, Northern Development and Mines, Tourism and Recreation, all of which have a very real interest and involvement in things that happen with respect to the fishery.

We reviewed the original strategic plan that was a government-approved, cabinet-approved document from 1976. We felt it was time to revisit it. We have done that and we have made some changes as a result of input that has been received, first of all, from some other ministries. Then we went out and talked one on one with a broad range of user groups, stakeholders and interest groups.

Miss Roberts: May I have a list of those you have spoken with?

Mr Christie: Sure.

Miss Roberts: I do not need it today, but I would like that.

Mr Christie: That goes on for ever. There are about 50 different groups.

Miss Roberts: That would be helpful, because there are people who indicate they have not been contacted. I would like to know who you have so I could say, "Yes, you have been represented."

Hon Mrs McLeod: Could you also indicate approximately how many of the SPOF 2 documents were sent out, because that is much broader than the groups that were contacted on a personal basis? I think there were several thousand.

Mr Christie: The last report I heard was 6,000.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We have had replies from several thousand as well.

Mr Christie: Exactly. These were individuals who expressed an interest, asked for and received the document.

Miss Roberts: That can be done as well?

Mr Christie: Oh, sure.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We could give you a sense of how the distribution list was developed. You would not want all 6,000 names.

Miss Roberts: No, I would not.

1700

Hon Mrs McLeod: It has also moved into a stage of follow-up where there are five implementation working groups established, which might relate to your questions of who is on the working groups and what kind of follow-up contact they are going to have.

Miss Roberts: Yes.

Mr Christie: Again, the working groups are composed of MNR staff along with other ministry staff, along with the major stakeholders and user groups. They just had their last workshop last weekend and now there is going to be an interministerial committee that will be putting forward the recommendations to the minister about where we go from here with implementation.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You might like to know the makeup of the implementation working groups as well.

Miss Roberts: Yes, if I might be advised of that.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Last, something else you might be interested in is the role that the Ontario Fisheries Advisory Council has had, because I think it would also have reviewed the SPOF documents.

Mr Christie: The fisheries advisory council has been kept fully up to date. Some of their members have been sitting in on the workshops and on these implementation subcommittees, and the fisheries advisory council will be asked to review and comment upon the document.

Miss Roberts: When do you expect it to be completed?

Mr Christie: We expect that we will have everything ready by early September.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Needless to say, you have all this data. If you feel there are some who have been left out of this rather extensive consultation group, we can add them.

Miss Roberts: Just as long as they also know that they can write directly. I think that would be extremely helpful.

If I might go on to conservation authorities, there is the review that is going on. Can you bring us up to date a bit more? You were very brief in your outline to begin with and that indeed there is a group now going out to consult. I do not see it right now, but the terms that you use, perhaps if you could sort of bring us up to date and zero in on what you see within the next six to eight months to a year.

Hon Mrs McLeod: This is an issue which of course has been studied repeatedly over a number of years, and I was suggesting yesterday that I may be guilty of falling into the concern that Mr Wildman had of, how many times do you continue to consult? There has been a lot of work done and I think each stage of review has advanced the issue of conservation authorities' restructuring.

But in discussion with a number of the different authorities, I recognized that there was still not total satisfaction that the steps we were taking were exactly the right ones, at least in the minds of a number of the authorities. The concerns seem to fall into two particular categories, one being amalgamation, which was a concern, not by any means for all the authorities but for at least a few of the authorities and, second, the issue of funding proposals, which did change from the report that is known as the Bugar report to the report that is known as the Ballinger report.

The funding proposals in the Ballinger report caused some concerns for the groups that were relatively satisfied with the funding proposals in the Bugar report, and of course there were concerns from some conservation authorities about the funding proposals that were in the Bugar report. So we still, I think, have some work to do to ensure that people feel as though the proposed changes are going to work as effectively as we want them to work.

We will be establishing an implementation group of the ministry people from the conservation authorities branch, who will be working with each of the authorities to determine what their specific concerns are. If the authorities are concerned about the proposed amalgamation, I think our implementation group would want to acknowledge their concerns, determine what alternatives might be seen as preferable and how feasible those alternatives would be, or in fact what might be done to alleviate the concerns that they have.

In terms of the funding issue, we have asked the implementation group if it would work co-operatively with the authorities, and I have asked the authorities if they would co-operate with our group to provide budget information so that we could assess the actual impact of the proposed changes to the funding proposal on each of the authorities, to have a clear sense of whether or not the most recent proposals would work as fairly as possible for each of the authorities in the province. Once we have a report back, we would be in a position to put forward the proposed changes.

Miss Roberts: You and I have spoken of this before. Have you considered that liaison committee speaking with municipalities as well as with the authorities themselves?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, as to how we do that, obviously this is a fairly extensive task that they are undertaking. The communication has been with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and we are now receiving some communication from individual municipalities that have some specific concerns about the conservation authorities review. I believe we have to take the time to ensure that we have heard their concerns and try to address them as well as we can.

Miss Roberts: It is a broadly based liaison group. Is it going to be all Ministry of Natural Resources people, or are you going to bring in some Environment people and some Municipal Affairs people?

Hon Mrs McLeod: There are actually two different groups. The group that will be out meeting with the conservation authorities and looking at the implications of the specific proposals would be a Ministry of Natural Resources staff group. There is a great deal of legwork that is involved in carrying out that kind of consultation, but we have also proposed, on an ongoing basis, whatever form the restructuring of the conservation authorities takes, that there be a liaison committee established between the conservation authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources. So there is a forum for continuous discussion of issues that are of concern to both the authorities and the ministry.

Miss Roberts: Thank you very much. That is helpful.

Zebra mussels: This is something that is of great importance in my area, and has been, and I have been asking questions about this for over a year now. Both Mr Wildman and Mr Pollock have indicated the necessity to know about funding. In my particular area, I have a water line which is almost clogged with zebra mussels.

The problem basically is that it is a very old line and they cannot use the usual way of cleaning it out. Is it called a snake? You know, something to bore it out.

Mr Miller: A pig.

Miss Roberts: A snake or pig. What I would be interested in is, you have indicated that there is an interministerial committee going on and that it might be making some recommendations for project money. Is there any indication as to how soon that might be and what type of project money, research and development project money or to repair damage as a result of zebra mussels? Do you have any indication at all what project funds may be available or may be recommended?

Hon Mrs McLeod: It really would be premature for me to comment on that, other than to recognize that the whole question of the effect on water lines. I think the incident you raise would be a municipal water line. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is a member of our committee and that is very specifically the reason why Municipal Affairs is there and is concerned, that we recognize that zebra mussels can have a very real effect on the municipal water infrastructure. That issue will certainly be examined by the committee and could well be a part of the recognition of funding implications.

Miss Roberts: Is there a bureaucratic committee working on this as well?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes.

Miss Roberts: Do you expect this to come together before the end of this session, before 28 June, or do you expect it to be longer than that?

Hon Mrs McLeod: The committees are obviously together now and they have been working quite actively for a good month now, so as I indicated to Mr Wildman, I would hope that there would be a proposal fairly soon from that committee.

Miss Roberts: But you do not have any particular timing on that.

Hon Mrs McLeod: No, I do not.

Miss Roberts: Okay. The last one is the deer population. I know there have been certain moneys made available for owners of orchards or owners of vineyards or various farming operations to keep the deer out. One of them, I know, is a deer fence. Are there any other ways to control the deer population that you are funding now?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think, and again I would stand to be corrected, that the only funding the Ministry of Natural Resources put into the control of the deer would be any costs that are involved in the controlled hunts and a proposal for a ministry cull in the Rondeau park, which is out for consultation right now. But the compensation and, I think, even the funding for deer fences would be through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food rather than through the Ministry of Natural Resources. I see Mr Miller shaking his head.

1710

Mr Miller: I have never heard of any program. I was listening carefully.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure that we have a funding line for deer fences.

Miss Roberts: Then I have been misinformed, because it was through the Ministry of Natural Resources that a farmer received some help and information.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Maybe a creative solution from a district office.

Miss Roberts: That is right, it might have been a very creative one, because we do have a lot of problems in that area.

You are talking about controlled hunts. Can you indicate to me what your feeling is in the future for controlled hunts, how many more of them we are going to have to have, particularly in southern Ontario? I note that not only is the deer population very good, but the wolf population is excellent in our area as well, as well as the coyote and dog population. We still have problems with rabies, but if I can see a wolf crossing a road at about 6 o'clock in the evening in very good shape, not scraggy or anything, I know that indeed that wolf population is excellent. Can you tell us anything more that you are going to be doing with respect to the controlled hunt, or are you going to be increasing it?

Hon Mrs McLeod: There are two separate programs that you have talked about, one being a controlled hunt, which would be in relation to deer, and the other being predator control, which would be in relation to wolves. There have not ever been controlled hunts for predators.

Miss Roberts: Are there things that occur that it is best the MNR does not know about?

Mr Christie: We are trying new and different things with respect to the controlled deer hunts in agricultural southern Ontario: having two seasons, an earlier one and a later one; extending the season lengths, particularly for archery seasons; and, in an attempt to utilize the deer in that manner, having the hunters take some of those deer to try to keep the population numbers down. We will continue to explore new and different ways to in fact do that.

We have not, as was mentioned, gotten into any sort of controlled hunts for things like wolves. We do work with land owners and municipalities to deal with problem animals and will continue to do so, again looking at new and innovative

ways to try to protect the livestock and the property of land owners.

Miss Roberts: Do you give any money to municipalities? When you do have a cow kill or a steer kill, it is paid by the municipality. Do you give any money to municipalities to help out with that?

Mr Christie: No, we do not.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think when bounties were being paid, they were being paid by the municipalities.

Miss Roberts: For compensation for the kill of the cow.

Mr Christie: The ministry of Agriculture and Food may.

Miss Roberts: But not you people.

Mr Christie: That is right.

Miss Roberts: I have other questions, but I believe my friends have some.

Mr Miller: I have a couple of questions. One is with regard to the aquaculture industry in Ontario, comprising about 175 licensed farms producing an estimated 2.5 million pounds of fish and of rainbow trout in 1987. It was worth \$6 million. I think the industry was requesting a change in the Game and Fish Act which would expand the number of species eligible for culture from the present four species—rainbow and brook trout, small-mouth and large-mouth bass—to 22 species. Has anything been done in this regard to promote and assist the aquaculture industry?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, and we indicated earlier that we are looking at amendments to the Game and Fish Act which would address the issue of the numbers of species which can be cultivated in a cage culture. My understanding is, and I again call on the deputy or Mr Christie, that that is a somewhat different issue from the fish farming. You are specifically asking about species in the cage culture?

Mr Miller: In the fish farming, yes. Has this been discussed before at the estimates?

Hon Mrs McLeod: No, I think we have just informally discussed it. We are proposing to bring in amendments to the Game and Fish Act, and that is one of the issues that is addressed in those amendments.

Mr Miller: In this session?

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is our hope that we will be able to bring in initial amendments in this session.

Mr Miller: Is the Aylmer station being operated now for quarantine purposes?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I see a nodding of the head.

Mr Christie: Yes, it is.

Mr Miller: Is it? What is it being used for, breeding purposes?

Mr Christie: No, the purpose of that facility is to act as a quarantine facility for fish or eggs of fish that are being brought into Ontario from other parts of North America, to ensure that the fish are disease-free. We do not want to have any new fish diseases brought into the province.

Mr Miller: Is there any productivity incentive program available to the fish farmers? Is there anything available to assist?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has some programs in fish farming more specifically, does it not? We would not have.

Mr Christie: I do not believe so. We had an incentive program in place up until two years ago. The interest in that program was almost non-existent. We had a very few projects and the program was stopped.

Mr Miller: Thank you very much. I think the incentive program was, according to the correspondence that we have, from the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The second thing is the gypsy moth. First of all, how much spraying has been done in the province this year? We did have a program put in place to cover about 4,700 hectares within Hal-dimand-Norfolk. There was more demand than what spraying was done. I know the spraying program has been taking place around Ontario. How much spraying has been done, and are we making progress on controlling the gypsy moth where the spraying has been done for several years now?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I was just looking for the particular vote number, because I think we actually have the figures on the expanded number of hectares that are proposed for spraying for gypsy moth this year, as well as the costs. Does anybody have that?

Mr Miller: How much time do we have left?

The Chair: About 15 minutes or so.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I will get you those figures, because I know they are available. There has been an expansion of the gypsy moth spray program for this year. There are many people who consider it still a relatively small area in relation to the size of the problem, but more and more communities are entering into agreements with the ministry to be part of the gypsy moth spray program, so there is a fairly significant expansion of the program.

Mr Miller: Are gypsy moths a problem in northern Ontario?

Mr Wildman: No. That is in eastern Ontario and southern Ontario.

Mr Miller: I remember when Jim Pollock was concerned about it. I think that goes back while.

Mr Wildman: We have the tent caterpillars and spruce budworms, but we don't have gypsy moths yet. We are getting rabies, so I guess we will get it too. I do not know.

Hon Mrs McLeod: For the record, the 1989 spray program on both crown land and private land was a total of 12,951 hectares and the 1990 proposed spray program on both crown and private land would be 36,000 hectares. It is quite a significant increase in the area being treated with the spray program. The area of defoliation in 1989 was 89,640 hectares, so we are expecting a significant increase in the problem this year and in the area affected by gypsy moth, but we do have an increase in our spray program as well.

1720

Mr Miller: My final question is on the nursery stock for new seedlings, specifically in the nursery at St Williams. Do

you know what the production was this year, maybe generally across the province and specifically for the St Williams nursery? I went to get some trees and they were sold out. We had some complaints from some other farmers in the area that there was a shortage of cedar for fence row, wind control or fence line. I just wondered what the capacity was this year and what the plans perhaps are for 1990-91.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I do not know whether we have the specific, individual nursery figures. Our forestry people are not here today because we were going to deal with forestry on our last day. The assistant deputy minister for southern Ontario does not have the figures at his fingertips for that particular nursery.

Mr Bugar: I can get them very quickly, but I cannot cite them off the top of my head, either the total or by species. We can get that very quickly if you want.

Mr Miller: No, I just wanted to raise the question. We will get the input at a later time. Can you send it to us?

Mr Bugar: We can either provide it next Tuesday or send it to you.

Mr Miller: Sounds good.

Mr Miclash: Minister, I have had a concern raised to me by casual staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources. They have indicated that they come on on a contract basis, sometimes for eight to 10 months, whatever. They are concerned about a program that is being brought into the ministry, the internship program, where interns are brought into the ministry to work for a period of two years, possibly at a higher salary, since they are working the full 12 months, as compared to somebody who is on casual staff working eight or 10 months. They feel they are being displaced by the people who are coming in and working as interns within the ministry. I believe the program is offered by the Ministry of Government Services. Your ministry has offered these interns a percentage of the total wages. I just want your comment on that.

Mr Gordon: I can speak to the internship program. I am Roger Gordon. It is a program run by the Human Resources Secretariat. It is run across all the ministries. It has a very specific focus, to increase the representation of under-24-year-olds. It is targeted at recent graduates. There was a concern that we were missing a generation in the Ontario public service, so it has a very specific target. That target has been focused even more to make it now both under 24 and in what are the designated equity groups.

In terms of competition between those people who have been brought on as interns versus our regular, unclassified staff, the interns have no job guarantee at the end of their internship period. They have to compete for a competition the same as anyone else. The advantage they may have is perhaps more focused training, but it is still a competition process at the end of it.

Mr Miclash: Yes, but are they guaranteed the 24 months?

Mr Gordon: Well, guaranteed inasmuch as the funding is there for 24 months. I guess if they cannot walk and chew gum, they will not stay around, but guaranteed in terms of so long as the performance is satisfactory, yes.

Mr Miclash: You see, what I am getting at is the casual employee who comes on contract is stating that he is being displaced by an intern who is actually given the two-year experience.

Mr Gordon: I would quarrel with the word "displaced," because this is incremental funding that comes to us from another source. It is not in our MNR budget mix, if you like, so we are quite partial to the internship program because it is that fabulous stuff, outside money. You know, very nice.

Mr Miclash: Have you had any complaints yourself from your casual staff?

Mr Gordon: We have had a couple of them complain. I guess the complaints have been more focused around their inability to get into the internship program themselves. In a couple of cases, that was people who were either outside the age criterion or were not in one of the targeted equity groups.

Mr Miclash: On to another subject that was raised in Thunder Bay during the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association meeting. That was concerning the taxation on waterfront lots for commercial establishments. I am just wondering if you could expand on that concept. When is it being implemented and why only on commercial properties?

Hon Mrs McLeod: On the question of taxation on land under docks and lands under water, Mr Vrancart would have some of the history of that.

Mr Vrancart: I am Ron Vrancart, executive director of the lands and waters group. In fact, it is not a tax. It is a licence of occupation for a water lot. What we are doing is insisting that commercial operators, mainly tourist outfitters and marinas, have a form of tenure for their docks primarily in front of their operations. The licence of occupation is one of the forms of tenure that we use within the ministry. The annual cost of that licence is \$750.

Mr Miclash: That would be for how much land?

Mr Vrancart: Whatever it happens to be. If you took the sides of the property and extended them out to a distance that would be agreed upon with the local district staff, that would be the extent of the water, from the water's edge out, in between the two sidelines.

Mr Miclash: So there is no variation, whether it be two acres of lakefront or 10 acres of lakefront, it is the same \$750?

Mr Vrancart: Yes.

Mr Miclash: Why was it only on commercial properties and not on private properties as well?

Mr Vrancart: It has been a long-time policy of the Ministry of Natural Resources that the use of the wetlands in front of a private property was intended to be a benefit that goes with that private property for private enjoyment. However, when it is a commercial purpose, we feel we should get some return to the crown for the use of those lands under water, which are crown lands.

The Chair: Anyone else from the government party?

Miss Roberts: Do we have any more time?

The Chair: Yes, you do.

Miss Roberts: Then, if I could go back to the fishing one, we talked briefly about the commercial fishing. I would like to have an overview of your ministry's position with respect to hobby fishing, how much money you put into their various clubs? I forget what you call them—the hatcheries—do you help with any of those hatcheries? If you do so, how many of

them? How many hatcheries do you have of your own, where are they located and how are those fingerlings?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Mr Christie, you can begin to come up to the front; I cannot handle this one alone. There are a number of different programs. There are the community fisheries involvement programs, and some of those are hatchery programs. They would receive support funding in the early stages of development. Then obviously there are, too, the ministry hatcheries. I am not sure if we have a separate funding figure for ministry hatcheries that you are looking for at the moment or not?

Miss Roberts: Yes, that is the type of information that I would like to know about.

Mr Christie: I am looking to try to find the specific numbers of private CFIP hatcheries that we have funded. There are quite a number of them spread throughout the province. As the minister said, it is seed money to help them get started, to buy equipment. The individuals involved donate the time.

1730

Miss Roberts: Do you do capital equipment versus the building itself?

Mr Christie: We would provide the funding for the materials for the building. The groups would put the building up and it would be their building. There are 60 hatcheries across the province that have been funded through the community fisheries involvement program.

Miss Roberts: Those would be non-profit organizations that are in existence across the province?

Mr Christie: Yes.

Miss Roberts: By community, do you mean non-profit, or completely municipal?

Mr Christie: Some. There are a few that are supported and sponsored by municipalities. Most of them are sponsored by organizations like fish and game clubs or local tourist associations which are interested in getting involved in growing fish.

Miss Roberts: What percentage is in the community projects versus your output?

Mr Christie: There are about six that would be called community-related hatcheries. The remainder are the smaller clubs and the tourist associations.

Mr Wildman: You do not fund municipal hatcheries.

Mr Christie: No. We assist in the startup. We also provide some funding through CFIP, up to a maximum of \$8,000, for maintenance, but we do not provide operational funds.

Miss Roberts: Who does the quality control of this? My concern is now the zebra mussels and diseases. I am not so sure if fish get diseases, but I think they do. Do you provide the quality control?

Mr Christie: Yes, we do.

Miss Roberts: That is an easy answer. In your own hatcheries—you must have some MNR hatcheries.

Mr Christie: Yes.

Miss Roberts: How many do you have and where are they located?

Mr Christie: They are located in most regions throughout the province. Again, I am trying to think of the number.

Miss Roberts: More than six?

Mr Christie: About a dozen. About 20% of our budget is in the fish production component.

Miss Roberts: Do you provide the roe for the community hatchery?

Mr Christie: We started them off, taught the people how to do it, and they do most of that themselves now.

Miss Roberts: Who has the final say as to where the fingerlings go?

Mr Christie: After they are grown?

Miss Roberts: Yes, after the production.

Mr Christie: The ministry and the group involved decide up front where the fish ought to be planted. It is done by agreement. The fish are grown and then planted in those areas that are mutually agreed upon.

Miss Roberts: What percentage of the young fingerlings go into what I would call inland waters, inland lakes versus the Great Lakes?

Mr Christie: The largest numbers of fish that are planted would be going into the Great Lakes.

Miss Roberts: That is interesting.

Mr Christie: It is just simply the size of the areas and the magnitude of the rehabilitation challenge in the Great Lakes.

Miss Roberts: There are concerns about commercial fishing in all of the Great Lakes. There is very little commercial fishing left in Lake Ontario right now. I think there is some in the Kingston area.

Mr Christie: The Bay of Quinte.

Miss Roberts: That is right, but very little involved in that. Do you provide fingerlings for that particular commercial fishery?

Mr Christie: We do not provide fish for any particular fishery. Our concern is the maintenance of healthy aquatic ecosystems, including the fish that inhabit those ecosystems. What we are really trying to do in places like Lake Ontario is to rehabilitate the fishery for the benefits that it will provide to the people of the province of Ontario and our visitors. That will include, in some cases, commercial fishery. In other cases, it will be a recreational fishery.

Miss Roberts: I would like to go on to the wetlands policy, if I might. I have not been around here as long as most of the members of the staff have been. I know that wetlands policy has been hanging around for a long period of time. Perhaps you could sort of bring us up to speed on what is happening now and what you see happening in the future, because I know Ducks Unlimited and other groups are very concerned about the wetlands policy, which deals not only with the proper ecosystem for fishing but for all the wild habitat that we have.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The draft policy was sent out for consultation in the fall. There was a very good response to the consultation. There were some concerns raised by environmental groups who responded to the draft policy. I think it is fair to say the concerns were primarily in relationship to the clarity of

expectation about the management of the wetland itself and, as well, expectations about what development could or could not take place in buffer zones.

We have reviewed the input from the consultation and are now considering changes in the draft policy to reflect the concerns that were raised or to provide additional clarification. There will be some further consultation with both the municipalities and the environmental groups that responded. We trust that a final policy will be brought forward.

Miss Roberts: Do you have wetlands identified now? Is there somewhere that I could go for each region and say, "Here are the wetlands that now exist, here are the wetlands that existed in 1970, the wetlands that existed in 1930, and the wetlands that we would like to see in 1999"? Is there something like that in existence?

Hon Mrs McLeod: In southern and eastern Ontario we have a system that has identified wetlands by classification in that area. That has not yet been extended to northern Ontario, although we are working with that. In terms of historical classification, I would think that is not available.

Miss Roberts: How well is the classification of your wetlands done now? Is it definitive? Those maps that we are aware of now, are those your definitive areas for wetlands?

Mr Christie: What we have done is to map and classify the existing wetlands. There are some proposals on the books now to create additional wetlands, but the ones that are mapped, and you have seen the maps, are the existing wetlands and the ones that we are trying to protect.

Miss Roberts: In the discussions you have had about the buffer zones—I have not had much input into this—are you suggesting buffer zones for many of those larger areas that are now wetlands, or are you hoping? It may be premature.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I guess there is always a buffer around a wetland area. It is a question of the land immediately adjacent to an identified wetland and the extent to which we provide guidelines for the kind of development which could take place on lands adjacent to the wetland. That is an issue that has to be addressed in the policy statement.

The Chair: If you ask how much time you have left, the answer is none.

Miss Roberts: It has been a pleasure chatting with you.

Just a moment, there is one comment I must make. Mr Christie, you make good answers.

The Chair: What is the difference between making good answers and giving good answers?

Mrs Marland for up to 17 minutes. You might share that with Mr Cousens.

Mrs Marland: Yes, I think my colleague the member for Markham wished to start off.

Mr Cousens: I would like to compliment the ministry on the program of tree planting. I did my job this morning and it was a heavy tree. It took an awful lot of us from Annswell Court in Thornhill to do it, but your ministry delivered and properly placed it. I was really pleased to see the initiative and the fact that something is happening in that regard. It is a token gesture at this point, but it is in the right direction.

I would like to compliment the ministry as well on the geographical information services' efforts. I have some conflict of interest there with my private enterprise activities, but I see

the industry generally being very impressed by the process that is being followed in the ministry. It is open. It is encouraging a whole new thrust in our province of a high-tech nature where we can become world leaders. It has been going on for a while, but I commend you and your ministry for what it can do and its long-term benefits.

1740

Now to the things that we do when we are in opposition. My colleague the member for Mississauga South will touch on my first point of concern in detail, the Rouge Valley, so I will leave that to Margaret Marland.

I have real worries about Awenda Provincial Park and parks like it. It is in Tiny township in Simcoe county and is typical, I think, of the whole process of how the government handles parks.

It is impossible to book. People cancel bookings. You end up not serving day people in an adequate way, and you are not putting money in adding extra people to serve the place and open up other campsites. Especially at Awenda, people turn up at the site in droves on a long weekend and your people, Minister, direct them to other private beaches or other places around and cause havoc for everybody else around.

I would say that the ministry is an irresponsible citizen by virtue of the way it is running some of the parks. The ministry should find ways of opening the doors, making it more welcome and easy for people to book in and somehow having more encouragement for day passes and day usage without charging them more than they deserve, and yet protecting those who are staying overnight.

If you do not have the information on Awenda park, maybe you and your ministry could get back to me with more details on it. It is a concern to me and it is a concern to people in those neighbourhoods around your park how you are dealing with your neighbours. I would say you are not a friendly, good neighbour to have as a ministry. I think you should look at it. It is bad for our neighbourhood when I am up near my cottage and your ministry is directing them near our beach. I think it is unkind, unfair and uncalled for. If you did something with your existing beaches up there, then you would do something to help the people in the whole neighbourhood. You cannot just expect the township or the county to do it, but the ministry has a responsibility and I think it is letting people down on it.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I would be surprised if there was a redirection from any of our provincial parks unless the provincial park was already being used to capacity at that particular point in time.

Mr Cousens: But there is. We have checked it out; we have proof. We have people up there and they have asked them, and they are doing it. They are sending them to our beach.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I can imagine that there are people who want to use a park facility being redirected to another park, but my surprise would be if that were occurring unless the park that they were originally wanting to come into was already at capacity, because I think that there is indeed an openness and encouragement of people to use parks, but there are certainly parks, particularly in the southern part of the province, that are used to the point of capacity at peak periods and on weekends. When that occurs, park staff do attempt to locate another park facility as near as possible so that people can have an opportunity to have the benefits of a park.

Mr Cousens: You sound so nice with your answer, but look at your policy, look at what they are doing in some of these neighbourhoods. You have done nothing with that park in particular. Put some money in there. You have got the land, you have got the resources.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think that is the other part of the question you are asking, because I think perhaps what you are raising is, do we need to expand the facilities that we have in our parks where those parks are being used to capacity? The estimates book indicates that we have made park development one of our priorities as a ministry this year and have directed funding essentially from other areas of priority in order to be able to increase our parks' budget. Nevertheless, we have a very extensive park system of some 263 parks, and therefore we cannot expand all of the facilities in all of the parks as rapidly as we would like. But that is a priority for the ministry this year.

Mr Cousens: Would you be so kind as to look at your policy and how you redirect traffic and how you are destroying some other peoples' fun on weekends? People come in and really create major problems—traffic problems, congestion problems, beach problems, pollution problems—which are stemming from the attractiveness of your parks, which are full quickly, and then the people do not know where to go. When you are sending them out, you are sending them into areas in which, quite candidly, they are not welcome.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure what policy you are directing me to look at. I think the only policy we would have would be an expectation that people are encouraged and welcome to use our parks, but that we do reach a point of capacity where there has to be some concern about environmental abuse in that particular park area. There may well be differences from district to district in terms of what other facilities are available and how welcome increased numbers of users are in the other facilities.

Mr Cousens: We reach it every weekend. They are over every weekend and they are doing it every weekend to me and 1,000 or 2,000 other people where I know they exist. I tell you, it is not a fun time at the summer any more when you start having people that your ministry are not able to handle and the way you are sending them. There may be other parks they could send them to, rather than to private beaches. They are sending them to the wrong place. I am really concerned about it, and if you would commit to look into it, it would be a real sense of importance.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We would certainly also be happy to encourage Ontarians to travel even farther afield to enjoy the parks that are less well used.

Mrs Marland: My colleague just complimented the ministry. I just want on a personal basis to compliment you as the minister. I have to say that from where I sit in the House, when you get up as Minister of Natural Resources and speak—actually, when you get up and speak as Minister of Energy as well—I continue to be very impressed by the tremendous ability that you demonstrate in the House. Although obviously, as an opposition member, I do not always appreciate the answers or agree with the policy, there is no question that you are a bright, shining light in that cabinet and you are to be commended for your ability to get up and answer questions on your feet. There just is not anyone who does it the way you do, and you never are unfair or ungracious. I personally want to put that on the record, because that is how I feel about you.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Thank you very much.

Mrs Marland: In the limited time that we have, my questions are naturally because of my interest in the Rouge park.

I welcomed your announcement on the dedication of the Rouge park, which hopefully was as a result of the unanimous support of all three parties to my resolution in the House last fall that this park become a reality. I understand in your opening statement to this committee that you referred to your announcement of your ministry's intention to form an advisory committee, in partnership with other government agencies and private organizations, to plan the management of the first phase of the Rouge River Valley Park.

It has been two months now since your announcement was made about the park, and I cannot find in the estimates where there is an allocation for the implementation of the Rouge River Valley Park. Also, I would like to know what the implementation committee has achieved so far, and what will the committee be doing for the rest of the fiscal year? What is the plan of implementation for the Rouge River Valley Park and when can we expect the park to open?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I believe that there is a figure in the estimates, although I am not sure it is a separate line. It is on page 58 of the estimates book, and it is a separate line, \$700,000 funding for the advisory committee on issues related to the establishment of the park. There is an explanation on page 58 of the line item. So there is a budget for the implementation committee to work with over the next fiscal year.

The implementation committee is not yet finally structured, although the invitations were sent out within a week of the announcement. What we have done with the groups that are to be part of the implementation committee is ask them for nominations to the implementation committee. I believe that we have received those names and we are now looking to the appointment of a chairperson for the implementation committee, which should happen fairly shortly.

The first task for that implementation committee will be to plan for the implementation of the park in the first phase, which is the Rouge Valley land proper. I think it is a 4,500-acre section of the park, but it is the valley lands of the Rouge itself. They will be making decisions in terms of the nature of the park to be established, how it would be managed and what the management plan would be for the park itself.

Mrs Marland: I am looking at page 58 and I see "Funding for parks revitalization."

Hon Mrs McLeod: And three lines farther on down, "Funding for advisory committee to minister on issues related to the establishment of a park in Rouge Valley."

1750

Mrs Marland: Okay. So that is \$700,000. All right. I accept that answer. I do not have any idea at this point whether that is going to be enough money. Hopefully, if the committee established that they need more money with the help of some opposition questions, you would be able to get it out of the cabinet sweepstakes.

Miss Roberts: Only with the help of the backbenchers.

Mrs Marland: I came into this meeting late this afternoon because I was speaking in the House.

The Chair: Yes. We had the distinct pleasure of watching you all afternoon.

Mrs Marland: On Bill 114. I know you were talking about zebra mussels. If this question has been answered, I will review it in Hansard, but I would like to receive details on the allocation for the interministerial remedial action committee on zebra mussels. How much will be spent, what staff have been or will be hired and what specific activities do they plan?

Hon Mrs McLeod: There have been a number of questions related to that and perhaps I could briefly summarize the responses by indicating that the expenditures that have been made for zebra mussels at this point have been made by individual ministries, so there would be a significant amount of staff time and research effort through the Ministry of Natural Resources and a significant amount of research done through the Ministry of the Environment. There has also been significant expenditure on the part of Ontario Hydro on infrastructure.

The interministerial committee that has been established is to co-ordinate the efforts of the individual ministries. They, at this point, have not made a submission. The Ministry of Natural Resources is the lead on that committee. The committee will be recommending to me, for presentation to cabinet, a budget for the programs that it sees as being most appropriate to undertake. That is, as I have said, I hope fairly imminent.

Mrs Marland: Thank you. On the conservation land tax reduction program, I have noticed that there is a decrease of \$2 million or 52% in the money to be spent on the conservation land tax reduction program and I wonder if you could tell us why.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think this is a very direct relationship to what was actually claimed last year for conservation tax rebates. That is a program in which people voluntarily participate. So this year's estimate would be based upon actual expenditures and projections.

Mrs Marland: Are you saying there was not a need based on last year's claims?

Hon Mrs McLeod: The tax rebate simply was not claimed in the amounts that were estimated last year.

Mrs Marland: The ANSI program, areas of natural and scientific interest: Over two years ago the ministry allocated \$2.5 million to the ANSI program. There seems to be some confusion in the regions regarding the implementation of this program and the allocation of funds. I was wondering whether you would give us a status report on how much of the \$2.5 million has been spent, where it has been spent and what the future plans are for this program.

Mr Christie: That announcement of \$2.5 million was intended to cover a five-year time period; \$500,000 a year. In the first year we spent slightly over \$400,000 on the ANSI program. Since that time, including staff time and additional funds that have been put into the program, we are spending, as of last year, about \$650,000.

Mrs Marland: So you are saying you have spent 25% in two years of a five-year program. If you announced \$2.5 million over five years—

Mr Christie: Over five years, yes. What I am saying is that we are spending as much or more than the commitment that was made.

Mrs Marland: What are the future plans for this program?

Mr Christie: We will be carrying on, continuing with the program, continuing to identify those areas that are special. That is the biggest part, the identification of those areas and then ensuring that they are set aside, particularly on private land where we work out arrangements with the private land owner through a number of programs to try to ensure that those special features are maintained.

Mrs Marland: Could you give me an example of a designation under the program.

Mr Christie: A specific area?

Mrs Marland: Yes, that has been identified and where there has been an agreement reached with the property owner.

Mr Christie: There are a number of areas in southwestern Ontario that are called Carolinian Canada areas. Those are all identified as areas of natural and scientific interest. Bacchus Woods is a very special one where there is an agreement in place with a special board of trustees, the conservation authority and a whole range of interest groups that are involved with the management of that very special area.

The ANSIs that are the most common are relatively small and found on individual pieces of private land. Through the Natural Heritage League, we have a land owner contact program in place out of the University of Guelph. Essentially what we are doing is that the people from the University of Guelph are contacting these people and they are entering into handshake agreements with them to try to maintain those very special features in their present state.

Hon Mrs McLeod: There is also a great deal of work that is done in identifying ANSIs on crown land. Ministry people are carrying out studies in a fairly widespread way across the province, including northern Ontario, in identifying areas of special interest. The setting aside of the area of the Obabika triangle in the Temagami forest area was a result of interim data from a study of an ANSI in the Temagami region.

Mrs Marland: The frustration of the shortage of time is bouncing from subject to subject.

The Chair: Yes, and you only have about a 30-second bounce left.

Mrs Marland: Could we direct a question in general about conservation authority funding? Obviously, I speak for the Credit Valley Conservation Authority. Every time we meet we direct a problem to them, we have direct referral back to us that it is because of the shortage of funding from the province that they are not able to deal with whatever the problem is. Can you tell me what help you need to have with the funding of the conservation authorities in general.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am sure that every minister who comes before the standing committee on estimates would like to be able to make a case for more funding in virtually every program that we have. The conservation authorities are certainly one where if there was more funding available, they would be able to do even more than they are currently doing.

They did receive a 4% increase in their budget this year which was comparable to transfer payments made in other ministries. Obviously, again, there is more that you can do if you have more resources. There are proposals for an alternative approach to funding conservation authorities in the recommendations for conservation authority restructuring.

I was indicating earlier that those proposals in themselves are a source of concern to some of the authorities and we are

carrying out some further consultation with each of the authorities to determine whether or not the proposed changes in funding allocation are going to work in the best interests of the authorities across the province, but I think the overall level of funding is always an issue not just for conservation authorities, but for virtually all our transfer agencies and municipalities.

Mrs Marland: Just one fast question.

The Chair: No, I am very strict, as you know. You are cut off. I am sorry.

Mrs Marland: It is not even six o'clock.

The Chair: Two minutes for the member for Algoma.

Mr Wildman: I do not like to do that to my friend the member for Mississauga South.

The Chair: I know she will do it to you every time, though, if you let her. I know her.

Mr Wildman: I would like to come back to one serious bone of contention that we raised with regard to the fishing licences revenue and expenditures. I want to be absolutely clear as to what the minister's response is. As I understand it, the minister is saying that all the revenue accruing from the sale of the fishing licences is indeed being allocated to expenditures with regard to the fisheries in the province. However, the ministry has put a restraint on its expenditures generally and that policy of restraint applies to the increases in funding for fisheries stocking and habitat improvement in funding other than the amount accruing from the sale of fishing licences.

If that is a correct summation of the ministry's position, then it would mean that in fact what the previous minister said,

that the funding for fisheries allocated by the ministry would continue to rise and would in no way be subsidized by the fishing licence revenues, is certainly not happening.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I really must take these 30 seconds that we have left available to us to correct the latter statement you have made, although I think up to that point you were correctly reflecting what I had said. The commitment the minister had made was that the revenue from the resident sport fishing licences would be returned to the fisheries budget. That is clearly being done.

Mr Wildman: That is not all he said.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The secondary question is the extent to which the base fisheries budget continues to increase. No one at any point in time can predict what the budget allocations or the increase in expenditures for a ministry will be, so how do we determine at what level the base budget would have to increase in order to respond to the question, has it increased at a level sufficient to ensure that the revenues from the resident sport fishing licences are not in some way subsidizing the base fisheries budget?

What I have indicated is that the cross-ministerial constraint of 3%, which the Ministry of Natural Resources accepted as did other ministries, has been incorporated across all our branches and has not affected the fisheries branch to a greater extent than it has affected other branches.

The Chair: We will continue on Tuesday next at 3:30. The time will be equally split among the three parties and we will finish at six or sooner.

The committee adjourned at 1802.

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Substitution:

Marland, Margaret (Mississauga South PC) for Mr Villeneuve

Also taking part:

Wiseman, Douglas J. (Lanark-Renfrew PC)

Clerk: Brown, Harold

Staff:

Campbell, Elaine, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

Witnesses:

From the Ministry of Natural Resources:
 McLeod, Hon Lyn, Minister of Energy and Minister of Natural Resources (Fort William L)
 Tough, George, Deputy Minister
 Christie, Ron, Executive Director, Outdoor Recreation
 Vrancart, Ron, Executive Director, Lands and Waters
 Burgar, Bob, Assistant Deputy Minister

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 5 June 1990

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 34^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mardi 5 juin 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Estimates,
Ministry of Natural Resources

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Budget des dépenses,
ministère des Richesses
naturelles

Chair: George R. McCague
Clerk: Harold Brown

Président : George R. McCague
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Tuesday 5 June 1990

The committee met at 1531 in committee room 2.

ESTIMATES, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES (continued)

Vote 2801, ministry administration program:

The Chair: It being 3:30, let's go. The minister has some answers to questions raised previously which we will get on the record before 6 o'clock. We will let Mr Wildman start with his line of questioning.

Mr Wildman: Just before getting directly into the forestry vote itself, I would like to deal with an issue that was raised last time and was related, of course, to forest management in the province, and that is forest access road maintenance.

I have before me a copy of a letter dated 13 December 1988. It was written to me and signed by Mr Vrancart regarding road maintenance. It is dealing specifically with the Blind River district, but he refers to the ministry generally. I will just read a couple of short excerpts.

"The road maintenance budget for both Blind River district and the Ministry of Natural Resources has been decreasing steadily since the early 1980s. For example the present road maintenance budget in Blind River district is only 20% of what it was in 1983. Thus their inability to maintain any more than six access roads." That is out of about 162.

Then he says, "Other higher priorities for available funding in the outdoor recreation program precluded anything being allocated to access point or boat launch maintenance this year."

That is in 1988. I will just skip to the last part of the letter. He says:

"In light of the present concerns regarding access road maintenance, you are aware that the Ministry of Natural Resources, together with the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the Ministry of Transportation, are undertaking a joint review of the issues of funding and responsibility for access roads in the north. Recommendations from this committee will be forthcoming in the next month or so."

That was in December 1988; I do not know what recommendations have been forthcoming yet. I am just wondering if I can get a response to that before we go directly into the forestry management area.

Hon Mrs McLeod: A response specifically in terms of the changes in the budget allocated for access road maintenance or proposals for recommendations for the—

Mr Wildman: Essentially what Mr Vrancart is saying is, as I said in the last session, that the Ministry of Natural Resources has no money for it. In light of that, this ministry is meeting along with the Ministry of Northern Development and the Ministry of Transportation to undertake a joint review of the issues and make recommendations as to, if this ministry cannot fund it, what should be done. I am just wondering what happened. That was in December 1988.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think it relates back to an issue that we did discuss somewhat in the first day of estimates, since you raised those concerns in your opening comments, and I believe

that I did acknowledge that day that we do have an increased area of access roads, obviously, as we have new roads constructed in each year. Those access roads, therefore, are an increasing responsibility for the Ministry of Natural Resources. There are concerns about our ability to maintain those at a level of expectation of the users, who want to use them for recreational purposes and for access to cottages.

I think there are similar concerns about management of other services for the public on crown lands and how we can best sustain that, so we have in fact been working with other ministries to look at what the options might be, whether there are ways of ensuring that we can have the revenues or the approach to service delivery that would allow us to maintain both road access and other services.

Those are the specifics. I am not sure if the deputy would like to add something.

Mr Tough: We are continuing to discuss with the other two ministries the issue of those roads, and we talked in an earlier session of this committee about the shortfall in terms of our capacity to maintain the network. As I say, we are continuing our discussions with the Ministry of Northern Development and the Ministry of Transportation. We did obtain some additional funding this year, as I think the member is aware. We obtained from Management Board \$1.9 million in additional funds which, as everyone knows, is not enough to deal with the backlog, but it is a welcome addition to the money available for those roads and bridges.

Mr Wildman: I appreciate that. I will not prolong this other than to point out that this letter was dated 13 December 1988. I received it in January 1989.

Hon Mrs McLeod: This is one of the final recommendations we are putting forward that we do not have at this point.

Mr Wildman: So the "month or so" has stretched into quite a "so."

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. I know it is a bit radical at estimates, but any suggestions that you have for solutions for this particular problem are always welcome.

Mr Wildman: I have made the suggestion on a number of occasions that if this government is indeed committed to promoting tourism and if this government has funded, through the Ministry of Natural Resources, forest access roads and then subsequently funded the establishment of boat launches and lake access points on those roads, this ministry and this government have an obligation to maintain them.

I admit some of them are access points that were just established by private groups, but the majority are ones that have been maintained by the Ministry of Natural Resources in the past and whose existence is acknowledged and pointed out by the Ministry of Transportation by erecting signs along highways saying "access point" directing people to them.

If we are going to manage the resources and the forests in the province, we have to build roads. They provide access. It is just not acceptable to me that if a government is committed to tourism, it would advertise access points along highways and

then leave the roads in such a condition or for that matter leave the access point in such a condition of disrepair that if anybody tried to use that road to get to the access point or tried to launch a boat there, he would risk damage to his vehicle or his boat. It is certainly not a very good advertisement for tourism in the province.

Having said that, I would like to move on to forestry itself, for which those roads are built. In regard to that, is it a fair analysis to say that some of the companies under forest management agreements in fact use the road construction as a money-maker?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think that was one of the questions you tabled. I am not sure whether you have the responses in front of you.

Although we have suggested not reading the answers into the record, I want to give a response to the particular question that Mr Wildman had asked the first day in terms of the numerical figures. In 1990-91, the ministry will be providing \$17.6 million to the forest industry under the FMA program for roads. For roads on crown management units, the figure is \$14.4 million.

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At the same time, the forest industry is spending between \$110 million and \$120 million annually on capital construction of primary and secondary roads, road maintenance and bridge construction. The ministry pays the invoice cost of road construction, with ceilings of \$13,800 per kilometre for secondary roads and \$51,000 per kilometre for primary roads. I think those figures would indicate that in fact it is certainly not a money-maker for the forest industries and that they are contributing substantially to the cost of access roads.

Mr Wildman: I had tabled a number of other questions. I wanted to know how much money has been allocated to regeneration and how much of that was under the FMAs, how much on the crown management units directly by the ministry and so on. Can I get that information?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. Mr Chairman, how would you like me to deal with the responses? There were a number of questions tabled the first day. We do have responses, I think, to all those questions raised. Would you like me to read the responses to each of the questions now or respond to them one by one?

Mr Wildman: If they directly relate to forestry. There were a number of other questions related to other matters as well which I do not really want right now.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Shall I respond specifically to the forestry questions?

The Chair: You keep raising them, so what can I do? You are going to get the answers, I guess. Which specific one do you want the answer to?

Mr Wildman: I would like to know how the expenditure over the last number of years has changed with regard to planting and tending and how that is divided up among the FMAs and the crown management units that the ministry itself is directly responsible for.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Let me give you the responses to the very specific questions in those areas that you had tabled the first day.

You had asked how many hectares of cutover and subsequent renewal treatments there are on crown management units. I point out that the exact figures for 1989-90 will not be available until December 1990, but our current estimate for the total area harvested in the province for 1989-90 was 241,000 hectares on both crown and private land, and 185,000 hectares was planned for assisted renewal treatment in the 1989-90 fiscal year. Included in this figure is 21,000 hectares of natural regeneration that is also recorded in our statistics. As I indicated the first day, of course other natural regeneration does take place that is not counted in our statistics.

On FMA lands, cutover and subsequent treatment, we estimate that the harvest was 122,000 hectares, with assisted renewal of 85,000 hectares on FMA lands during the 1989-90 fiscal year.

On crown lands, our estimate currently available is available as an estimate for non-FMA lands, so it does include some private lands for which we have management agreements. We estimate that the harvest was 119,000 hectares, with assisted renewal of 100,000 hectares during the 1989-90 fiscal year.

Mr Wildman: You mentioned that you have some agreements on private land. Are you referring to Domtar's agreement regarding private lands in eastern Ontario?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the Domtar agreement would be included in that.

Mr Wildman: Does that include the Woodlands Improvement Act as well?

Mr Goodman: Could I have the question again?

Mr Wildman: I asked if the private lands referred to in the figures the minister provided to the committee included the Domtar agreement on private lands in eastern Ontario in the Cornwall area.

Mr Goodman: That is one agreement. The private land figures refer to all the private land management. There is a specific agreement in eastern Ontario that is tripartite with Domtar, the private land owner and the ministry in terms of sharing the burden of managing those lands. But in terms of the expenditures, the figures refer to the private land program, which is all-encompassing.

Mr Wildman: What I am trying to find out is, how does that agreement compare with the total amount; that is, is it a significant portion of that total amount?

Mr Goodman: No, it is not. It is \$500,000 a year for five years.

Mr Wildman: Currently the ministry is involved in a review of its management of private land forestry. Could you give me some indication of when that review is going to be completed?

Hon Mrs McLeod: My expectation is it will probably be the fall before we have the review completed and recommendations ready to come forward to cabinet.

Mr Wildman: I received just today in the mail a letter from the minister—dated today, which is faster than most things happen around here—in which the minister informs me—I suppose she may have sent this out to other members as well—that there is a need for an overall forestry policy for Ontario—which goes without saying—that reflects the priorities of the public and the provincial government. She indicates that Dr Peter Pearce of the University of British Columbia is to be appointed

to prepare an action plan during the next few weeks for the whole review, including its appropriate scope and mechanisms for carrying it out.

Later she says: "The forestry policy review itself is to be completed by the fall of 1991. An important objective is to bring cohesion to the several initiatives already under way and to ensure that all our policies are rooted in sustainable development principles."

She then assures that while this process is ongoing, it will not adversely affect other reviews that are already initiated, including the environmental assessment.

First, I am curious as to what prompted this and, if this was so imminent, and I understand the terms of reference attached are dated 10 May, did I miss something or was this mentioned in the minister's leadoff?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think I would have indicated in my leadoff comments that we were looking towards a new forest policy; as part of that, a development of new timber production policy, although I will not ascertain with absoluteness without a copy of Hansard in front of me exactly what words I used to refer to it.

I would not have mentioned Dr Pearse's name specifically because I did want the information to go out in the form that you currently have it in before introducing it in the estimates process. We did think it was important that this announcement essentially be made so that there would be an opportunity to discuss it during estimates.

Mr Wildman: I appreciate that. I just wonder what the state is now. We had a discussion earlier about what is meant by sustainable development, the minister's understanding of that and how forestry relates to that. I am not attempting to be overly partisan in this question, but does this mean that we do not now have an overall forest policy which reflects the priorities of the public or the provincial government, or are you taking the position that the priorities of the public, if not the government, are changing and therefore that is why we have to have a review? If it is the latter, how does this relate to the other studies and reviews being done?

For instance, on the class EA that is ongoing and will be ongoing for more than a little while, surely the ministry has put forward in its panel its position with regard to overall forest management, or is it just timber management? If it is just timber management before the EA, how does this review of overall forest policy fit with the EA?

1550

Hon Mrs McLeod: The question that you have just asked, I think, is the one that we have struggled to articulate even in preparing the information that has gone out indicating that Dr Pearse would be working with us. Clearly there have been forest policies and forest management policies and practices that we believe to be sound and effectively placed for many years. There have also been a number of reviews that have been carried out in the past, including the ones I think you referenced earlier in the estimates process by Dr Baskerville and Dr Rosehart. We certainly do not want to suggest that we are going to redo those reviews.

I think what we felt we wanted to be able to do as we work with our commitment to sustainable development—we know that there are changing realities and changing values in the 1990s, increasing concerns, for example, with the management of old-growth ecosystems—was to ensure that all the policies we have in place as a ministry are fully compatible and respon-

sive to the values that are held by the public in the 1990s, and that we are also, as a ministry, ensuring that all the policies which relate to forest management are truly integrated and are seen to be integrated.

What we are asking Dr Pearse to assist us with is an overall review of what we currently have in place, including past reviews that have been done by Dr Baskerville and Dr Rosehart; some sense of how well we have progressed in implementing the recommendations of the previous reviews; an analysis of our progress in developing a new timber production policy, which is a commitment we have under the class EA; and the whole question of policy on old pine growth management, which is one we recognize has to be part of forest management policy.

On wildlife policy which we are currently developing, our wetlands policies and our fisheries policies, quite obviously to be able to practise integrated forest management, the relationship between the policies and the way in which we carry out our planning has to be truly integrated. What Dr Pearse will be recommending to us is what form an overall forest policy should take to show that integration, whether there are gaps in our current policies that need to be addressed, and if so by what processes we would address the policy development that needs to take place.

Dr Pearse may well come back and say that virtually all is in place now and that it just needs to have an overall policy statement that conveys that sense of integrated management, or he may in fact identify some areas in which we need to address some changing values.

Mr Wildman: In relation to the timber management EA, surely in that process, and I know this for a fact, the ministry has developed forest management approaches. Obviously there are more areas of concern now being delineated, whether it be related to particular wetlands or particular wildlife species that might be affected by timber extraction, or other plant species that are considered important to be protected.

If the ministry has developed that for the EA and if the various interest groups, whether they be industry, labour, ecologists, recreationists, tourist outfitters, native people and so on, are able to make their positions known with regard to the ministry's policy in these areas and others before the Environmental Assessment Board, and that board then will make an assessment of all that and make a report on how timber should be managed, why do we need this additional study? I am not denigrating Dr Pearse's expertise. I just wonder what the reason is for this.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure if the question is one of whether or not the work that Dr Pearse would do would be a duplication or almost an intervention in the work that is being done through the—

Mr Wildman: You can deal with that if you wish, but my question was not in terms of Dr Pearse's work being an intervention, but rather, why is what he might be doing not already covered in the environmental assessment process?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I guess that was the question I was reframing to be able to respond to. I think the class environmental assessment is dealing with timber management planning processes. The recognition in the course of the class EA has been that you cannot deal in isolation with timber management planning processes because we are involved in integrated forest management. So any discussion about timber management

planning necessarily gets us into discussions, as it has at the class EA, about broader issues of forest management.

For me it becomes a question of the work the ministry is doing that is consistent with the examination of the class environmental assessment, perhaps a little beyond the scope of the class EA itself into even broader areas. I do not see that as being inconsistent. I see that as being very supportive of the purpose of the class environmental assessment.

It is my understanding that the class EA wanted to examine our timber production policy. The ministry has undertaken to present a new timber production policy to the environmental assessment. Our concern is that the timber production policy that is presented for examination reflect our values for timber production and in fact reflect the realities of the 1990s. So that is the work that we are doing in the timber production policy.

We are anxious to move ahead with the policies we believe are necessary to have solidly in place, including an overall policy that demonstrates integrated forest management. It is work that must be done in the interim. We do not think that in any way it would be inconsistent with recommendations of the class EA, but certainly the class EA may make further recommendations that have to be incorporated in the policies that we have in different areas.

Mr Wildman: I would like to deal with a couple of those things. I would not disagree that the current timber production policy must be re-evaluated. I agree with that. It should be. This policy has been around since 1972. I think it is fair to say, although I might get some argument, that it has never met its targets. The annual cuts have been high; regeneration success has been low. We have about 3.7 million hectares of Ontario's most productive forest lands that have not been regenerated, in my view. Is that accurate or not?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think, if I recall, that was a question you had also raised the first day.

Mr Wildman: I talked about the backlog.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Shall I give you the response specifically that is here?

Mr Wildman: Yes.

Hon Mrs McLeod: If I may, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: You may.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Mr Wildman had asked a question as to how we are doing on the backlog. The backlog of non-assisted regeneration on land in Ontario is approximately 300,000 hectares. But this is made up of 200,000 hectares that are treatable using silvicultural means such as planting, seeding and scarification where that area has not yet been stocked; 100,000 hectares are areas of forest that are less than five years after harvest or burn and are therefore not yet in a free-to-grow state. So I suppose the extrapolation from that would be that essentially the backlog of non-regenerated land is 200,000 hectares.

Mr Goodman: That is essentially correct. We categorize our backlog as 300,000 hectares, made up of the two categories you have talked about, both what we call NSR lands, not satisfactorily regenerated to whatever stocking or spacing regimes should be on those sites. The first category is the area that can be treated at an acceptable cost and that is the 200,000 level. The other category is those areas that are too young yet to go out and assess in terms of their free-to-grow status and to put them back into the inventory again. Much of that last category, the 100,000 hectares, will flow back into the inventory after the

five-year assessments and may not require additional investments.

Mr Wildman: That 300,000 is the total since the early 1960s that has not been treated and regenerated?

Mr Goodman: That is our current total in those two categories of NSR lands.

Mr Wildman: Traditionally the ministry has taken a position that there was a three-way split. In other words, 30% approximately had been treated prior to the FMAs going into effect, 30% was to regenerate itself naturally and 30% was being left. Are you telling me that has changed dramatically in the last five or six years?

1600

Mr Goodman: If I may, that leads us to the question of the regeneration gap.

Mr Wildman: Which is what I meant by backlog.

Mr Goodman: No, they are quite different. Let me define those two terms. First, backlog: We refer to backlog as those areas not satisfactorily regenerated to commercial species as established by going out and measuring it on the ground. That is our definition of backlog. Regen gap is quite different. That is the annual difference between the area harvested and the area regenerated to commercial species. In the last two or three years that annual regeneration gap was in the order of 20,000, 22,000, 24,000 hectares.

Mr Wildman: Annually.

Mr Goodman: Annually, yes.

Mr Wildman: How does that compare with the period, say, 10 years previous to the FMA program initiatives?

Mr Goodman: I would say it would have been significantly larger. I do not have that.

Mr Wildman: That is what I was referring to. I am sorry I used backlog instead of regen gap, but I want to know what we are doing about all those acres of land that were not regenerated prior to the FMAs coming into effect. I do not think anyone has suggested that you should say to the companies, even though they cut that acreage previously, that under the FMAs they have a responsibility of regenerating it even though the FMAs were not in effect when they cut. Obviously we have the responsibility of doing it, and I want to know how many hectares there are since, say, 1962, and what are we doing to cut that backlog of regen gap? I am not talking about 300,000. I was using backlog in terms of the dictionary definition, not your definition.

Mr Goodman: Yes, understood. As you may know, each FMA, when they entered the contractual obligation with the crown, had to agree on an NSR survey for the FMA. Based on those data, they were obligated to begin to treat that backlog of NSR lands. There was a schedule for them to do that over the five-year period and then over the second five-year period. In all cases the individual FMA holders have exceeded their targets in treating the NSR lands on those FMAs.

Mr Wildman: Good. Has the ministry done as well on its crown lands for which it is responsible?

Mr Goodman: I would say we probably have not. We are currently very active in completing NSR surveys for each of the crown management units. In fact that is a priority in these es-

timates for 1990-91, and we should have some better data on that post data collection this season.

Mr Wildman: Do you have any estimates on the total hectares that are in NSR lands?

Mr Goodman: We do have estimates. We have six categories of NSR lands, two of which we consider as true backlog and that can be treated to a commercial forest.

Mr Wildman: What are the other categories?

Mr Goodman: There are a whole host of ones. There is a class 1 that is still called an NSR but it is stocked and free to grow and we have not had a field party out to do the definitive measurements and put it back into the inventory. We think there are somewhere over two million hectares in that category. As the data come in, that will be added back into the inventory. We do consider the 300,000 hectares to be in the right ballpark of true backlog that investment should be made to bring back into commercial production.

Mr Wildman: According to the Ministry of Natural Resources 1988-89 annual report, "A new timber production policy was to be completed in the summer of 1989 which would provide a general review of the province's future wood supply needs." Has that policy been completed?

Hon Mrs McLeod: No. If I can refer back to earlier comments that I made about timber production policy development as part of our overall forest policy development, the ministry is working on the timber production policy. Quite frankly, I think one of the things we have done over the past few months is to stop and say that a timber production policy for the 1990s cannot be simply an updating of the policy of 1972. There are many different factors that are affecting forest management and timber production in the current environment and those are factors that have to be taken into account in our timber production policy. It is a much more complex process than I think it was back in 1972.

For example, we have to take fully into account questions of the impact of areas that are being withdrawn from our productive forest area for a number of different reasons. I think we have to have some sense of what impact recycling may have on future demand for timber. I think we are taking longer in our development of the timber production policy so that we can give some thought to the increased complexity.

Then obviously we have to deal with what underlies your questions and is a concern we share. When we know what the demand is, we have to make sure that we have a sustained yield, because sustained yield is part of sustainable development in the forest industry. That is the essential question that has to be addressed in the timber production policy.

Mr Wildman: I am glad to hear the minister use the term "sustained yield," because it has not been used up to now during these estimates and I was wondering if it had become outmoded in the ministry. We do not have in my view—as far as I can see we never have had, actually—programs for sustained yield. So if the ministry is now aiming in that direction, I think it is welcome, but it is going to mean a lot of changes. For instance, the timber production policy in my view was outdated by 1986 at least. Baskerville's audit showed that harvesting was taking place without the benefit of approved management plans in 23% of Ontario's productive forest areas. How has that changed since Baskerville made that statement?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am going to refer historical questions to those who have been involved in this much longer than I.

Mr Wildman: I want to know what the percentage is now; let's put it that way.

Mr Goodman: The question is how many timber management units have approved timber management plans? Is that the question?

Mr Wildman: Yes. As I said, Baskerville indicated that 23% of Ontario's productive forest area was being harvested without approved management plans. What is the situation now?

Mr Goodman: I would say that there is no harvesting allowed or licensing that takes place or annual schedules that are put forward under those licences unless there is an approved plan.

The Chair: Excuse me if I interrupt just for a moment. The Attorney General is not going to be here tomorrow because he is still in Ottawa and I cannot get any consensus on continuing with his estimates in his absence. So unless there is a very loud objection, we will cancel tomorrow.

Mr Wildman: Just the meeting, not the day.

The Chair: When your time is up we are done with you, so I do not think we will cancel it.

Miss Roberts: I have not spoken to anyone about it so I will advise as soon as I have some further information. I was not aware of that. I will advise as soon as I speak to someone else and find out what is going to happen next week as well, as quickly as I can.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks.

1610

Mr Wildman: I would just like to ask one question briefly on the response I just received. If there is no cutting in areas without approved plans, does that mean the planners have all the data required in order to provide good and accurate estimates of what the inventory is prior to the approval of the plan?

Mr Goodman: I would say that, in their professional opinion, they have the data on which to base their decisions that are associated with that plan.

Mr Wildman: How much of it is guesstimate?

Mr Goodman: I do not know the answer to that.

Mr Wildman: Are there any guesstimates involved? I think there are.

Mr Goodman: I would say that the business of forestry is both an art and a science, and some of it is qualitative and some of it is not.

Hon Mrs McLeod: With my slowly growing understanding of some of the issues of forestry management, and I would not pretend to be other than a layperson in this area, I am not sure I would say that any of the planning that goes on would be based upon guesstimate. As I read Dr Baskerville's and Dr Rosehart's reports and as I have talked with people in the ministry, there are different methods by which we gather our data. There is certainly a database that informs all the decisions that are made.

The question is how much of the data are reconfirmed by field surveys, operational cruising, to use the jargon that I am beginning to acquire, and I think that both Dr Baskerville and Dr Rosehart raised questions about the extent to which we are able to back up our photographic and satellite data with operational cruising data. I think we attempt to do that as much as possible but, quite clearly, with additional resources you would be able to do more of that.

I think the forest resources inventory work that is being done, moving our forest resources inventory into a much more high-tech state, is allowing us to be much more specific, not only with the accuracy of our initial data, but also our ability to update our data with changes, whether they are changes that have occurred through harvesting or through withdrawals, so that we have very up-to-date information. That is going to be a significant factor in terms of the accuracy of the inventory that we use as a basis for decision-making.

Mr Wildman: My time is quickly dissipating, so I will just put out a couple of things and perhaps I can get information subsequent to the estimates in response. While the environmental assessment is continuing, there have been a number of requests, somewhere between 8 and 12 requests, for specific EAs to be ordered in regard to timber management plans. As of the last part of last month, there had not been any individual EAs on timber management plans in the last two years and there were outstanding environmental assessment requests on the Timmins, Lanark, Magpie, Aulneau, Ranger Lake, Nakina, Algonquin and Tweed forests, if not others as well, and I am just wondering, why the length of time in making decisions with regard to those EAs?

I am not saying necessarily that an EA has to be ordered. I would just like to know why they are still on the desk without a decision. I know that is not your desk, it is the Ministry of the Environment's desk, but I would think that your ministry must have some input as to whether or not an EA is to be proceeded with when a request is made.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You have indicated, quite correctly, that the decisions about the individual environmental assessment requests are made by the Minister of the Environment. I have attempted in the past to clarify what I believe my role as Minister of Natural Resources is, and that is to provide the information to the Minister of the Environment about our planning processes and the degree to which we have dealt with the concerns that are raised by those who are requesting individual environmental assessments. We undertake to do that with each of the requests for individual EAs that is made to the Minister of the Environment.

I think it is a very complex issue that the Minister of the Environment has to address because there obviously is a class environmental assessment process taking place which is raising many questions about our planning process and will make recommendations to which we will respond. I think what we are attempting to do with our timber management plans in that interim is to ensure that in fact the best planning processes are in place now, that we are anticipating the kinds of concerns that are being raised at the class EA and we are responding to those with our current planning processes.

Certainly, in areas where the public has raised concerns in our consultation process, we take that consultation seriously and we go back and look at the timber management plans and make amendments to those where we feel we have not adequately addressed the concerns. We are going through that kind of complex planning process and then providing that kind of

information to the Minister of the Environment, and I think that is probably the reason why there are not faster decisions about the need for an individual EA.

Mr Wildman: I would like to raise two other matters very quickly. First is the question of clear-cuts. I think it is fair to say, since you are concerned about public concerns, that the public is concerned about clear-cutting, and I am not just talking about laymen who do not like to see the results of a clear-cut but also people who are involved in the industry. Even the Canadian Paperworkers Union and the IWA have both indicated they think there should be regulations on the size of clear-cuts.

The ecologists—I think Forests for Tomorrow, at the EA, have recommended a 100-hectare maximum for jack pine, for instance. Right now, as I understand it, there are no restrictions on the sizes of clear-cuts, except for the moose guidelines which recommend 130 hectares maximum. I understand during the environmental assessment hearings MNR officials presented evidence that until further guidelines are phased in, the limit on clear-cut size for moose areas will be 260 hectares, or double the recommended size.

We know there have been some very large clear-cuts in the past that make regeneration difficult. I know clear-cutting in some ways in some particular areas, in some sites, makes regenerating easier, but if a clear-cut is too big, then that itself can have effects on regeneration.

I would like to know, are we going to wait until the end of the EA to get a decision on the types of areas, the types of clear-cuts, the sizes of the clear-cuts that would be allowed? I think in Scandinavia there are significant restrictions; I think in Finland they are about 20 hectares; in Sweden, about 30 hectares; in the United States Forest Service they are about 40 hectares; there are other restrictions in other areas of no more than 200. I would just like to know the answer to that, and I will bring the other matter up before I get the response so that I can get it in before my time expires.

The other is specifically with regard to Temagami. I raised this at the outset, and I realize that this comes under another ministry, but obviously it is very important to the ongoing development of this ministry's policy and the public perception of forest management, particularly in old-growth areas.

I would like to know whether these figures are accurate. I understand that as part of the deal between the Ontario Development Corp and Roger Fryer, the Milne owner, workers were to receive a total of \$1.9 million, which works out to one month's pay for each year worked. That is the minimum restriction under the Employment Standards Act.

Also, each worker is to receive a \$6,000 moving allowance, or up to that amount. These funds could be used for retraining but, as we all know, since there is virtually nothing else to do in the Temagami area, there is nothing to retrain them for. So really, as far as I can see, it is just a moving allowance. I realize there have been negotiations going on, but those are the figures I have.

If you compare those with the other figures, the deal between Fryer and the ODC, which is still ongoing, it works out to \$6.5 million. That includes the \$1.9 million for the workers, but the total is \$6.5 million. Fryer owed, I think, something in the neighbourhood of \$4 million. That is including the settlement to the workers, the \$1.9 million I referred to, and his original investment of \$1.2 million. If these figures are correct, it seems to me that Fryer is coming out of this deal up \$2.5 million.

I understand he is claiming that he has lost \$40,000 on the deal. There is quite a discrepancy between a \$2.5 million profit

and a \$40,000 loss, and I think this should be made clear. I want to know, is the owner breaking even, is he losing money, is he going to make money, and how does that compare with the provision that has been made for his workers who have lost their jobs as a result of this deal?

1620

Hon Mrs McLeod: As I indicated in the first day of the estimates, because I have not been responsible for the negotiations, I really am hesitant to comment in specific detail on the financial figures. I do not have details about the negotiations with the workers at the Milne plant nor do I know if they are actually finalized, although I know the union has been very much involved in the negotiations.

In terms of Mr Fryer and the actual cost of purchase of the Milne mill, and this was a very unusual circumstance, as I indicated the first day of estimates, again I would not want to comment specifically on the profit and loss statements. I think what I do know and can say publicly is that Mr Fryer's companies were in financial difficulty; that we were made aware that because of those financial difficulties all the companies were in danger of being shut down; that this would have involved the loss of four mills in the area, and that there was therefore potential dislocation for a large number of workers in the Temagami area. The government's agreement to purchase the Milne mill was a means by which the other mills could be made financially stable so that in essence we could ensure job security for the workers in those other mills.

Mr Wildman: I just want to say I appreciate the time it has been given. I hope I will be able to get the responses in writing to the questions I have asked, and it has been a useful exercise. I will just close by saying I would also like to know what the holdup is in the order-in-council licences. Why is it taking so long?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Order-in-council licences on Temagami?

Mr Wildman: No, in general. You can use Blind River district as an example, but there has been a real holdup.

The Chair: Mr Wildman, you will no doubt stick around. If either of the other two parties run out of steam, you may get some more time.

Mr Wildman: I am sure they will not run out of steam.

Mr Pollock: I want to talk about the forest access roads. As you are no doubt aware, there are some real problems out there. These forest access roads went in to lakes and people followed them in and built cottages there. Now they winterize their cottages and nobody is plowing the roads in the winter-time.

We have the situation where maybe the municipality would take over the road if it did not have to bring the road up to municipal standards, but the Ministry of Transportation says it has to bring it up to MTO standards, which is a six-foot right of way and all the other criteria.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has said it is not going to plow the roads. The people who are in there are paying taxes and they feel that they should not have to pay taxes and plow the roads. We have this situation where it is deadlocked, nothing is being done; there are just all kinds of problems. A lot of people are quite concerned and quite upset over the fact that nothing is being resolved. Is the minister willing to meet with these people with regard to this?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am always willing to meet with people in an attempt to resolve specific problems. You are raising a problem which would not be within my ability to resolve when you raise the question of the standards that are required by another ministry and how that affects the municipality's willingness to take on responsibility for the maintenance of an access road. Quite clearly I could not, nor would I attempt to, resolve a problem by suggesting that there be an alteration in standards on the part of another ministry.

The issue of the Ministry of Natural Resources' ability to maintain the quality of roads within its entire inventory of roads is related to the issue that Mr Wildman was raising, although I suspect that was more on crown lands in unorganized territory than on land that is in an organized area where the municipality in fact could become involved.

Mr Wildman: Just to point out, I am not talking about roads to people's cottages; I am talking to access points.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, indeed. It becomes similar at the point at which for the Ministry of Natural Resources—if I am recalling the figure, some 37,000 kilometres of roads within its inventory—it does present real pressures in terms of maintenance of those roads to a level of standards for public safety, as well as to the level of expectation that people would have in using those roads. It is a difficult problem and I acknowledge that.

Mr Pollock: Would your ministry refuse to turn the road over to the municipality?

Hon Mrs McLeod: No.

Mr Pollock: Okay, that is step 1.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I cannot imagine any circumstances under which we would refuse to contemplate a proposal.

Mr Pollock: However, as I say, MTO will not fund or subsidize the municipality to do any work on that road if it is not brought up to MTO standards. How do we resolve this? Your ministry owns the road in the first place, so therefore until we get some action from the Ministry of Transportation it just sits there. Meanwhile, you have a lot of irate ratepayers and nothing is being resolved.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I guess that is the point at which I would have to recognize the role of another ministry and the role of a municipality, because I think, as we described the problem in that way, it is one which would best be resolved between the municipality and the Ministry of Transportation. I would certainly not undertake to intervene with the Ministry of Transportation to alter its standards. I think the question of how that road is maintained if the municipality were to assume responsibility for it is an issue for the municipality to work out with the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr Pollock: On the other hand, when we get these situations of abandoned railroads and things like that, all of a sudden you get an interministerial committee appointed, people from different ministries. Are you willing to be a part of a situation like that where different ministries will try to work out a solution with some of these forest access roads that you are wanting to get rid of? The municipality may be interested in taking it over—I cannot really speak for it—but it does not have the funds to bring it up to MTO standard.

Hon Mrs McLeod: That might well be an extension, if it is not already a part, of the discussion of Ministry of Natural

Resources staff with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in relationship to crown-managed roads and how we are going to find a way of maintaining those in the future. Those discussions have been taking place, as we indicated earlier.

Mr Pollock: They have been taking place, but is there no timetable right now when they might be resolved?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure that we have final solutions yet to propose.

Mr Pollock: Moving on the G. W. Martin mill at Harcourt, of course, you know as well as I do that the mill shut down because it did not get the timber licence; the sale did not go through, all that sort of thing. However, about the timber licence in north Hastings, are you going to tender those timber licences out to anybody else?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Could I just make one preparatory comment before answering your very direct question? I must keep correcting the record in terms of the mill in Harcourt being shut down because we did not issue crown timber licences. The mill in Harcourt was down and had been down for a year, as had the other Martin mills, and the Ministry of Natural Resources, I think, provided great support to the Martin company in being able to reactivate all the other mills except the one in Harcourt.

In the Harcourt situation we had indicated that we were prepared to license that mill but were not prepared at that point to reallocate the crown timber licences until we had done a review of the crown wood availability and future demand in the Algonquin region. Our reason for wanting to carry out that review was our concern about the stress on the Algonquin forest area, and beyond the Algonquin Provincial Park forest area the Algonquin district generally, and our belief that we need to do an assessment of the demand in the region and our ability to meet that demand in the future.

We had indicated to representatives of the Martin company, as well as to a potential purchaser of the Harcourt mill, that we would license that mill recognizing that 70% of its wood supply in the past had been private wood, that that would be sufficient within the five-year average that had been 70% or somewhat in excess of that, that we would carry out our study of crown wood in the Algonquin region and that if in fact the Harcourt mill was functioning, its need for crown wood would be considered in that review. We would not be reallocating the crown timber licences that had been allocated to Harcourt in the past until our review was carried out.

Mr Pollock: None of the timber licences then would be reallocated. They would all be frozen.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The licences that were previously allocated to Harcourt would not be reallocated until we had carried out our review.

I am not quite sure how one deals with school groups from one's riding in the middle of estimates.

The Chair: Do you need to take a picture?

Hon Mrs McLeod: That is what they were suggesting, but I do not want to interrupt the estimates process for that.

The Chair: Go and have your picture taken. We will take five minutes off.

Hon Mrs McLeod: At the wish of the committee. There are many people much more expert than I in forestry in the room if you wish to pursue some questions on that as well.

The Chair: We will just take a break. We do not want to do anything behind your back.

The committee recessed at 1632.

1637

The Chair: We are back in business. Were you in the middle of an answer or was Jim in the middle of a question?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think I was just affirming the fact that we were carrying out the study before we would allocate the licences that had formerly been allocated to the Harcourt mill.

Mr Pollock: You are going to go through a review before you do that?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes.

Mr Pollock: I am still a little lost. The Martin mill at Harcourt—I do not know where it is right at the present time—is it not going into receivership or has it gone into receivership? If it goes into receivership, is it not then in the same kind of situation that the Fryer mill up at Temagami is in? I am still a little curious to know why they are not getting basically the same deal as they did up in Temagami.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am not sure about the details of the company going into receivership. I do not have that information from the Martin company. I think in terms of a mill being down for economic reasons and difficulties experienced by the company, the situation of the Harcourt mill would not be dissimilar to the situation of the Milne mill a year ago. I think it is quite different from the situation we were experiencing in Temagami this spring.

Mr Pollock: You do not think there is any kind of comparison at all with the two situations?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the difficulty the ministry faces and will continue to face in situations where there is stress on the wood supply is how we most fairly allocate the available wood. In the situation of the Milne mill a year ago, it was essentially market forces, for want of a better descriptor, that caused it to shut down at the time. There was a purchaser, Mr Fryer, who offered to purchase the Milne mill. The ministry was asked if it could make a commitment to long-term wood supply for that mill. We indicated at the time that we believed we could.

I think the continuing pressures in the Temagami situation, including delays in our ability to complete the Red Squirrel Road, added stress to the wood supply situation at the Milne mill, particularly with the heavy dependence upon white pine at that particular mill. The stresses of the wood supply were not the only factor by any means affecting the difficulties Mr Fryer was experiencing, but they were a factor. I think it was for that reason that we had made a commitment a year before at the time of purchase. Mr Fryer made the investment in that mill, which involved his other companies as well as the Milne mill, and it was on the basis of our commitment of work that investment decision was made. I think we felt that as a result of that we had some obligation in that situation.

Mr Pollock: Moving on to another situation, I understand that you have ordered an audit in one particular situation. I am

not going to mention the name. What is the difference between an audit and an investigation?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Was this the land transfer, a situation where a sale of land was made by the conservation authority?

Mr Pollock: Yes.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think an audit is essentially just to satisfy ourselves as to the nature of the financial transaction that took place. Maybe it is simply a question of semantics or the connotations that we give to the use of terms that somehow audit seems at this point a more neutral term.

Mr Pollock: What is an investigation then?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think probably an investigation would be essentially a similar kind of thing, but perhaps it has a connotation that we think there may be a particular problem in this case. Concerns have been raised by the public. We are simply carrying out an audit to satisfy ourselves as to the nature of the financial transactions.

Mr Pollock: In talking about conservation authorities, there are still some people, and particularly some conservation authorities, who are not willing to amalgamate. In fact they are adamantly opposed to it, especially in certain directions in which apparently they are being directed. In fact basically they do not want to change at all. They figure that they run a good show, that they are doing the right things and have a well-managed conservation authority. They do not see any need for it either. Are you going to force them to amalgamate?

Hon Mrs McLeod: In any of the discussions I have had with the conservation authorities, I have certainly indicated that I would prefer to see an agreement worked out among the authorities as to the appropriateness of the amalgamation. One of the reasons we have slowed down our introduction of the proposed changes in the conservation authority structure is because we want to work with individual authorities and deal with the kinds of concerns they have about amalgamation as well as some of the other concerns.

I think that as you recognize, though, related to the issue of amalgamation are the other two issues of core mandate for the authorities and funding formula. In the absence of some amalgamation, the funding formula that has been proposed would not in all likelihood work effectively in terms of the allocation of conservation authority dollars—transfer payments—so we have to look at amalgamation core mandate and funding as part of an integral package of structural change for the authorities. We recognize that we have some work to do in terms of the specific concerns the authorities have, particularly when we have amalgamation and also funding formula. We are prepared to take the time to do that work.

Mr Pollock: Just off the cuff, you would not have an accurate count, but have you a lot of landfill sites on crown land that are not being maintained?

Mr Tough: None that I know of.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The deputy just told me that there are none.

Mr Tough: Do you mean not operated or operated and not maintained?

Mr Pollock: They are just sitting there and not being maintained.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think there are some landfill sites that have been closed and therefore they would not be maintained.

Mr Pollock: They may be closed, but do you have a guard on the gates, sort of thing, saying, "Don't put garbage in here"? So there are some landfill sites that are not being maintained out there.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. In answer to the question about whether or not we would have a guard on the site, I am not aware of any situations in which we would have personnel on sites that have been closed. I would expect that we probably have closed access to the site.

The Chair: Maybe a couple of bears.

Hon Mrs McLeod: That is true.

Mr Pollock: About safety, you mentioned that was a federal issue. In land-locked lakes, is that still a federal issue? I can understand that on, say, the Trent-Severn or the Rideau it could well be a federal issue, but in land-locked lakes, is that still a federal issue, boat safety, the size, the regulations, all of that?

Hon Mrs McLeod: My understanding is that almost all, if not all, of the areas of jurisdiction in recreational boating are under federal authority.

Mr Wildman: The OPP is involved with that.

Mr Pollock: They enforce federal law.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes.

Mr Cousens: I have a few questions I would like to ask on a couple of subjects. I think the first one would be on page 41 of the estimates book. It comes through in earlier discussions that the standing committee on public accounts had on firefighting. There were a number of recommendations we made to the ministry that could help us determine how effective we are in Ontario with our firefighting compared to other jurisdictions, not only in identification but the results we have in extinguishing those fires more quickly.

We spent quite a bit of time looking at it and also visited some of your sites. Could you give me an update as to what the ministry is doing, first of all in the whole methodology of evaluating our approach to it, and include as well something on how we can compare the different districts. When you say we are doing very well in one district, how do you know you can really say they are doing well compared to another or to the western provinces or to Minnesota? Are we going to be using some technology to assist us with that?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think it would be appropriate for me to call upon our expert in fire management.

Mr Cousens: Time for another picture.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I would be happy to wax about the skills of our firefighting crews. I think they were demonstrated at Hagersville and that is typical of the kind of expertise. I know, as a still relative newcomer to the ministry, how highly regarded the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources firefighters are, but for the details you have asked for I think I should turn to the expert.

Mr Cousens: My question did not have anything to do with the quality of the people or the service.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Although you were asking about comparisons between effectiveness in our jurisdiction and other jurisdictions.

Mr Cousens: That is right.

Mr Lingenfelter: I am Lou Lingenfelter, director of aviation and fire management. The question you ask is a difficult question to answer in terms of measuring the effectiveness. We are recognized worldwide, throughout the world, as being a lead agency in wildfire-fighting.

In response to your question, though, we have contracted with Dr Martell, University of Toronto, to help us answer the question in terms of how effective we are and how we get at measuring our effectiveness. At this point in time we do not have an answer. We are expecting Dr Martell to provide us with some methods of getting at that answer later this fall.

Mr Cousens: Are you looking at an analysis that would include technology that would be used in the United States, Sweden and other jurisdictions that might have parallel situations with us?

Mr Lingenfelter: That is right. He is trying to develop a model for us that will help us get a solution to that question.

Mr Cousens: It is an important subject and I know the public accounts committee expressed quite a bit of interest in it last year. So this study has been under way for some months and is in progress now. When would you expect to have the results of it, and would they be public?

Hon Mrs McLeod: The question was when we would expect the study to be completed, when we would have the results and whether the results would be public.

Mr Lingenfelter: I believe the response from Dr Martell is expected around December of this year and the results would certainly be public, yes.

1650

Mr Cousens: That is fine. I guess to me it is a major issue, the amount of loss that we suffer in this province every year with fire.

The other thing I want to ask about is detection. Have there been any new techniques to identify in an early way where the fires are? I know there has been a fair amount of technology developed in that area as well. To what degree are we leaders in that?

Mr Lingenfelter: We moved to the aerial detection method quite a number of years ago and that is still with us today. We still find that fairly effective. We have a very good prediction system in fire management in Ontario. On a daily basis we try to predict how many fires we are going to have in any given place in Ontario and we gear our detection system towards our prediction. In other words, if we think there are going to be a significant number of fires around the Fort Frances area, then we will concentrate a heavy detection program in that area in that given time. We are fairly successful in that respect.

Mr Cousens: Are you using satellite communications at all at this point in time or is that a direction you are going in?

Mr Lingenfelter: That is something for the future. We are not there yet.

Mr Cousens: To what degree are you looking into that as a new methodology?

Mr Lingenfelter: We have not really touched it at all yet.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You might already be aware, but other members of the committee might not know about the lightning sensors and the hooking in of the lightning detectors to the computer system. So in fact at the fire centre we can detect exactly where lightning has struck the ground and relate that to high-risk fire areas.

Mr Cousens: Yes, I am aware of that. I have had quite an interest in this for some time. The one area that is expanding—maybe it is just the kind of mutual interest we all have—is that surely there are new techniques to have an early warning system for fires using satellites, which are able now to detect far more quickly. It is another method. You are talking to a layman who has just done some reading on it, but I have been looking forward to it.

Mr Lingenfelter: I am not aware that technology is being used yet for that purpose, but as soon as we have an inkling that it is there we will certainly be investigating it.

Mr Pollock: Apparently in your ads on the radio you are saying that camp fires actually start a fair amount of forest fires. Has anybody ever been charged in a case like that?

Mr Lingenfelter: Yes.

Mr Pollock: Quite a few?

Mr Lingenfelter: No, not very many people are charged.

Mr Pollock: Nevertheless, there have been some.

Mr Lingenfelter: Yes.

Mr Pollock: I would think you could actually get a handle on who is going into what area quite quickly. If they are charged and the fines are heavy enough, it would not be too long before that would start to reduce carelessness on behalf of the people who are starting camp fires.

Mr Lingenfelter: We have charged individuals. It is often very difficult to come up with sufficient evidence to proceed with the laying of a charge. We sometimes suspect who may have started a fire, but if the evidence is not there, clear and finite, we do not proceed with it.

Mr Cousens: I want to ask about the water levels in the Great Lakes.

Interjection.

Mr Cousens: Thank you very much. I am concerned about the firefighting thing and I know public accounts will be following it up again, because it is one of our interests.

The water levels in the Great Lakes have fluctuated a great deal over the last five years and they are now reaching a new low. I just wonder if the minister could give some comment on those levels, the degree to which she is working with the federal government and just what is being done to monitor it. Is there any corrective action that can be taken? Is it something that is purely cyclical? I happen to believe that with the warming that is going on and the greenhouse effect, we are going to be seeing the Great Lakes changing in their levels. I would be interested in having some discussion on that.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think the concern about the potential impact of global warming on the levels of the Great Lakes is certainly being recognized by all of us who are addressing this global warming concern. In terms of the details of current water

levels on the Great Lakes, Maurice Lewis of the water management branch could perhaps address that more specifically.

Mr Lewis: I am Maurice Lewis, director of conservation authorities and water management branch.

The current levels on the Great Lakes are really fairly close to their long-term average for this time of the year. In some cases they may be down a bit, but it is not really appreciable. I think the level on Lake Superior right now is about a foot below the average level for this time of the year. Certainly, in the recent past, the levels have gone down dramatically since 1985-86, when they were at an all-time record high.

The International Joint Commission is currently studying the fluctuating water levels in the Great Lakes. That is why the ministry is participating in on the International Joint Commission board, providing staff support and representing the province's interest in identifying some of the concerns about fluctuating water levels. The International Joint Commission has taken some steps to identify some concerns, and I guess recently on Lake Ontario some special efforts have been made to ensure that the levels are being maintained within a fairly good range for recreational boating activities. That is one of the concerns that will be looked at in the current studies, where previously the emphasis was on looking at power interests and navigation interests.

Mr Cousens: One of the things lay people do not fully understand is when you hear people say, "They are taking more water off at Lake Michigan into the Mississippi system and various other places." To what degree is government at any level able to influence the levels in the Great Lakes? Are there certain lakes where they can influence the level more than others and, if so, how?

Mr Lewis: There again, the International Joint Commission did some studies back in about 1983 that looked at the consumptive uses and the diversions into and out of the Great Lakes system. They came to the conclusion that the net result of the diversions into and out of the Great Lakes were not really that appreciable. Certainly, the province has co-operated in the Longlac-Ogoki diversion. That diversion at the present time diverts water into Lake Superior, and during the 1985 high water levels, that water was let flow in the natural way it does flow, to the north. In terms of what that did to the levels along the Great Lakes, it was within a tenth of a foot on Lake Superior and somewhat less on the lakes as you come down the system. So I guess in summary, there is not really a lot that can be done to affect the water levels on the Great Lakes with the present diversions.

Mr Cousens: I guess to me there are a couple of issues that could be faced in the future. If the levels of the Great Lakes go down more, and if the worries some of us have about global warming take effect, then the Great Lakes could go down even further. That is one of the assumptions, is that not correct?

Mr Lewis: Yes, that is right. I guess that was one of the controversies last year. I think there was a proposal by the US Army Corps of Engineers. They wanted to divert additional waters through the Lake Michigan diversions to help some problems with navigation on the lower Mississippi River. We strongly resisted that proposal to take additional water out of Lake Michigan. As it turns out, they did not follow through on the proposal.

Mr Cousens: The jurisdictional control of water in Lake Michigan really opens up several questions. Do we have any

control over what the US can do with the water at that point? Is there an international guideline that we follow or is there something between Canada and the United States? What methodology do we have?

Mr Lewis: If you look at it, Lake Michigan is not really a boundary water. It is totally within the United States. So in terms of the bargaining chip we have there, it is simply one of moral suasion and that seems to have been working so far in the negotiations. I am talking here about the group between the eight Great Lakes states, Quebec and Ontario.

1700

Mr Cousens: I appreciate that. I was not sure just how that works. I worry, maybe unnecessarily, about the point in the future when the US is going to say, "We need the water and we are going to take it regardless," and we do not have any control over what is going to happen, because when the water goes down in Lake Michigan it is going to impact all the other lakes accordingly. It is going to have a levelling effect.

Mr Lewis: That is one of the points we will certainly bring to the table in the International Joint Commission fluctuating water level study. We would like to see something perhaps a little more formal which would prevent that, in the event of that occurrence happening, and yet it may well be that in terms of having some agreements that are written now, maybe there is some way of legislating that through the IJC or through—

Mr Cousens: That is going to be tough.

Mr Lewis: Yes.

Mr Cousens: I would be interested in this subject, as one who belongs to every association I can belong to on the Great Lakes and who is president of a small beach owners' association. I have watched closely and your answers coincide with mine.

I guess the one thing I see also being long term is the diversion of water from some of the rivers that flow north into Hudson Bay into the Great Lakes, because we may well have a North American problem—

Mr Wildman: The GRAND Canal.

Mr Cousens: Yes, there is going to be a need to at least have that one in the back of our minds. Is there any study on that at the present time and what can you report on it?

Mr Lewis: Our response to the GRAND Canal scheme is that there were some significant environmental factors there that have not really been addressed in that proposal, in terms of looking at the global warming situation. Those are factors that we would have to consider in looking at that type of proposal.

Mr Cousens: It would be fair to ask the minister at this level, is this something you are looking at or are prepared to look at or have investigations on at the present time? What can you report on your policy in that regard?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Specifically in terms of potential future diversion projects?

Mr Cousens: Yes.

Hon Mrs McLeod: It is not something that I have been involved with since coming into the ministry. It is something that has not been raised in the months I have been involved. I would need to have a much better understanding of what the

reasons would be at this point in time for looking at diversion projects.

Mr Cousens: I am not suggesting it. I am just saying that when you are in the kind of position you are in, I think it is one of those things where you do not want to have a surprise come up and suddenly have to make a decision, instead of having done the advance thinking on it.

I would like to suggest that the ministry at least have some greater understanding of that subject. I think it is going to become far more of an issue environmentally, and certainly the survival of all the neighbouring communities along the whole of the Great Lakes, in Canada and the US, will be impacted by the change in the water levels.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, and I think the questions you are asking are important ones and fairly complex ones. While I suggested that the question of specific diversion projects is not one I have been involved with since coming into the ministry, certainly the question of global warming is one that I have been very much involved with, and the potential impact of global warming. I think the concern we have is, how do we address the issues of global warming at the source to try to deal with that as a problem in itself?

A second related problem quite clearly is the whole question of water conservation and our recognition that there may be concerns about water 20 or 25 years in the future and that now is the time to begin to think about that.

Mr Cousens: I am sort of getting the signal. I did not have time to get into all those points. I am a conservationist. I feel I want to be an environmentalist. I feel there are many, many issues—specifically, I was dealing only with this—in the broader context of water management and conservation.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, and that is certainly something we are involved with, although I have not been involved with specific diversion schemes.

The Chair: It rather scares one when you hear that to satisfy the drought in California they are going to take water from Vancouver, which was on the news this week. So what Mr Cousens is saying may not be as far away as we would hope it would be. Never would be better.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think that was an issue that was of concern to my predecessor at the time of the free trade agreement.

Mr Pollock: On this subject, what impact do you think irrigation pumps have on the whole Great Lakes system? There is no doubt a lot of them draw water out of the Great Lakes system, especially in the summertime, of course.

Mr Lewis: I guess in terms of consumptive uses—that is, taking the water out of the system and its not being returned to the lake system—agricultural use is one of the higher consumptive users, but in terms of actual use of water in the basin, it is one of the lesser users. It is more industrial, more municipal. I do not have the exact figures on what the total per cent of the consumption is for irrigation purposes, but it is fairly low.

Mr Michlash: Minister, last week I spoke a little bit about the internship program in terms of employment with the ministry. I would like to touch on the hiring of native people in the ministry and what kind of programs are being set up. I am quite often questioned as I go to the farther northern portion of the province about programs for native people in the ministry. I

wonder if you could expand on any programs for employment in that area.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am going to ask Roger Gordon if he might help me address this, both in terms of the internship program and in terms of employment equity commitments that we make as a ministry, and also in terms of some of the specific training programs we are putting in place. I think Sault College is currently offering a resource technician training program for native people. That is the beginning of not only a training program for many positions within the ministry, but also the first step towards potentially training as conservation officers so that we would be able to have numbers of native conservation officers. Mr Gordon could expand on that.

Mr Gordon: The minister has spoken to probably our most impressive initiative, I think, that has worked very well. We have, as part of our employment equity plans, identified some targeted hiring for natives. I do not have those figures with me at hand, but we have identified areas where we intend to increase native involvement. The main initiative we have is to try to increase the feeder group through this initiative the minister has made reference to. The majority of, if you like, good jobs in the Ministry of Natural Resources involve getting into the resource technology field. It has been a traditional difficulty with some of the native people lacking those credentials. So this is an initiative that will get them the credentials and get them into the mainstream of MNR employment.

Mr Michlash: How about in areas of firefighting, tree planting, those areas? What kind of initiatives do you have there?

Mr Gordon: I know we have native fire crews. Perhaps Mr Lingenfelter will have details. I know it is an issue we have been going on with.

Mr Lingenfelter: In terms of native fire crews, we have a number of native people, first of all, involved in our main fire crews, and we have native people involved in our auxiliary fire crews and they are also involved—other people—in the extra firefighting as emergencies arise. I do not know how many would be in each of those categories, but I would estimate well over 100 in the main fire crews and in the auxiliary crew system.

Mr Michlash: Is there specialized training in the auxiliary fire crews?

Mr Lingenfelter: Yes, they receive the same training as our unit crews do.

Mr Michlash: On another area, I know that Ontario Hydro is planning a number of power lines, especially through the north. We know of the agreement between Manitoba and Ontario in terms of the actual takeover of a good amount of land to build these transmission lines. Is there any kind of agreement being set up to compensate for those lands that are being taken over by Ontario Hydro?

Hon Mrs McLeod: To compensate the crown for crown lands that have been used? There is an agreement in place—which is the question I thought you were about to ask—in terms of tree planting on the areas that have been cleared for transmission lines. That is an agreement we have just recently signed with Ontario Hydro so that it would undertake to regenerate all of the lands that have been cleared for transmission line purposes. In terms of an actual sale of crown lands for transmission lines, I am not sure if that has been the practice in the past. I do

not think there is a financial transaction in the transfer of crown lands to Hydro.

1710

Mr Miclash: In terms of reforestation, you say that there is a program in place for those areas that are cut through by transmission lines.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes. That agreement was signed just last month.

Mr Carrothers: I wonder if I can ask some questions about south of the French River and talk about the forests in the region of Halton, Oakville.

The Acting Chair (Mr Wildman): Do you have oaks there?

Mr Carrothers: There are a lot of oaks there. Most of the white oaks are gone, unfortunately. The name remains, but the resource has disappeared.

There are a lot of private woodlots and things around in Halton, the Niagara Escarpment and other areas. I was just curious. What controls exist if someone wants to start logging for commercial purposes, taking some of those trees off? Do they have to get any permission from anywhere? What sorts of management practices and regeneration practices would they have to get into?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I am going to ask for some assistance on the specifics of this, because my understanding is that there would be a variety of possibilities, depending on the particular area. First of all, there would be the possibility that private land owners are involved in the woodlands improvement programs and therefore there would be an agreement between the ministry and the private land owner. And there would be a tax rebate situation involved, so they would have made some commitments for the preservation and management of the woodlands on their property. I think there would be municipal areas in which there are bylaws related to the cutting of trees on tree lots, and that becomes an issue, and review under the Trees Act, because there have been concerns about whether or not more could be done to strengthen the kind of bylaws that municipalities are able to pass. Mr Goodman, again, may want to add some details to that.

The Acting Chair: Just to add to that, does the Trees Act apply north of the French River?

Mr Goodman: Yes it does, sir. Minister, you have covered it very well. There are a variety of mechanisms that do regulate the harvesting or cutting of trees even on private land, and the minister has mentioned those. If in fact the land owner does have an agreement under the Woodlands Improvement Act, he has certain obligations that he must meet. As well, if it is in a municipality that has a bylaw under the Trees Act, then that municipality can regulate the cutting of trees on that private land. At the moment, we are discussing that with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and other organizations which are looking for a strengthened opportunity there to move their regulations even a little further. Those discussions are ongoing at the present time. But the Trees Act does allow individual municipalities to structure bylaws that regulate cutting.

Mr Carrothers: I want to get a sense of where that kicks in. Obviously, if I take the tree out of my backyard, I hope I do not need permission or I am in trouble.

Miss Roberts: You need permission.

Mr Carrothers: Oh, no. Well, there you go. Strike the record. If I have one of the managed forests which exist in Halton or I have entered into an agreement, then there is something already existing. Where in between those two situations do these laws start to kick in? Would I have to get permission to cut a tree? Say I just get out a buzzsaw and take down all the trees on my property. What happens?

Mr Goodman: I would say that if you did that in 1990, you would do that at your peril, sir, in terms of your neighbours, your municipality and other interest groups.

Mr Carrothers: To take it out of the urban context into the more rural, a woodlot or something, say I just level a 10-acre woodlot. What happens to me? Do I need any permission to do that? There is some kind of bylaw that is involved.

Mr Goodman: You are talking about southern Ontario, and as a former native of southern Ontario I assume it is all under a township or a municipal government of some sort, and if in fact there is a Trees Act, they may well take action under the Trees Act.

Mr Carrothers: Let us deal very specifically. You have something in the parkway belt that runs within the middle of Halton. I have land in there, I take all my trees off just for the heck of it because I do not like being in the parkway belt. What happens to me? Can anything be done to me under the present structure?

Mr Goodman: I do not know whether that municipality has a bylaw under the Trees Act.

Mr Carrothers: Assume it does have a bylaw. I guess what I am getting at is that I have been led to believe there are some, shall we say, gaps of jurisdiction and weaknesses in the present structure and I am just trying to get at what we might do to strengthen that.

There are some examples around of that very thing that has happened. There have been woodlots cleared, wetlands affected, environmentally sensitive areas that have been created under whatever legislation they have been designated as such, but they are on private land. The next thing you know, the bulldozers come in or the trees have been taken out, and guess what, the sensitive area is now gone. It does not appear from my observation that there is any permission required. A few technicalities have been broken but there is no way to deal with that, no way to stop it from happening under the present structure. Am I misunderstanding or do we have some gaps?

Hon Mrs McLeod: I think your sense that there are gaps is certainly reflected in the fact that the municipalities have indicated to us through AMO that they would like to see us review the Trees Act with a view to providing a legislative basis that would allow them to introduce stronger bylaws to deal with the issue of tree cutting on private lands. I think we are prepared to carry out that review of the Trees Act.

There are obviously some very sensitive issues involved in legislation which governs conduct on private lands, so I think one of the reasons we are a little hesitant to be categorical in answering your questions is that we are prepared to carry out that review. We recognize the kind of concern that has led to the request that we review the Trees Act, but we have not yet begun the review and really addressed from a legal point of view, and perhaps even a constitutional point of view, what is possible under the Trees Act.

Miss Roberts: Many of the municipalities have a bylaw; the problem is enforcing that bylaw. There has not been sufficient information put out into the community about the bylaw that does exist, but most of those bylaws are strong enough to stop you from cutting something down on your own property. It is very important that more information be put out.

My question to the ministry would be, is this an area that you are looking at? Are you dealing with the conservation authorities on this? Who is going to be responsible? Who is going to lead your ministry on that subject?

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes, I think we are prepared to review it. It is a concern, quite clearly, which is surfacing in a number of different jurisdictions. All of us share the concern about the environmental impact of tree cutting that can go on, particularly when, in the areas that you have described, it may involve areas of Carolinian forest, which we are very clearly concerned to protect.

Who would be the lead within the ministry?

Mr Tough: As Mr Goodman mentioned, the forest resources group and also our field people are having discussions with AMO, but the review you referred to is going on with the municipalities, which have a concern, as we do, about the efficacy of the bylaws and also, as the member mentioned, the awareness of the need, the concern and the enforcement.

Mr Goodman: At the last meeting of AMO, there was a very strong resolution that was passed unanimously suggesting that our minister review it, and we are now attempting to put that process in place so that we can review it.

Hon Mrs McLeod: You were probably actually not asking who within the ministry would take the lead. I would say it would be the ministry centrally that would take the lead in that review.

Miss Roberts: The problem is that it costs maybe \$1,000 for a municipality to prosecute for the cutting down of one tree. That is the very difficult part of it. That is something the ministry should be looking at, because there are prosecutions that have to go through the municipality, and that is very costly. Therefore, the smaller municipalities are not at all apt to prosecute, even though they know who has cut down the trees. I think that is something the ministry should be looking at, especially when you have the overall view of forests and the protection of wetlands.

Mr Matrundola: I am a little concerned here. Although I have a great concern about the environment and everything else, which is important, I also have a concern regarding the rights of a property owner. There are cases where perhaps there is a large extension of land, 300, 400, 1,000 acres, and it is all treed and so forth. That is one thing. My concern is when a smaller land owner, 30, 40, 50, 100 acres maybe, and these 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 acres of trees on that property. The municipalities come and claim it as a park; Environment comes and claims that the trees must not be touched, or if there is a little stream or a little bit of wetland or whatever, conservationists come and take it. Everybody takes.

1720

With all due respect, I submit to you that before they can do that, they should say, "Okay, we'll abide by the market value, and then if we want to give it away, we'll give it away," because I see the erosion of property rights announced day after day, and I do not think that is fair. I believe that when people have held a

piece of property for a number of years and have paid their mortgages, frequently very high, as they are today and so forth, and then they see their own property rights eroded, that is not right. I think we should have a little bit different view.

It is very easy for municipalities to say, "You don't touch this and you don't touch that." I have seen where there is absolutely no need whatsoever for conservation authorities to come in and take quite a bit for free or next to nothing. "That land," they say, "isn't worth anything." For whom, pray tell, are we doing this? I do have a real concern about protecting the balance of rights of the property owner, so I think we should be a little careful in the direction that we may be going and what we are doing. I strongly recommend—suggest, anyway; I do not like recommending. I only make suggestions—that we look at it closely in protecting the rights of a property owner.

Hon Mrs McLeod: The issue that you are raising is tremendously complex and it has many different aspects, depending on the kind of situation we are dealing with.

Again, it is a little bit like the response on the management of woodlands: that there would be different kinds of situations across the province. The issue of wetlands protection, for example, is not something where a conservation authority can simply come in and take private land away for wetlands. There has been a program carried out by the conservation authorities attempting to acquire wetlands, and we have extended what is held by conservation authorities or the crown in wetland areas that are particularly sensitive areas. That has involved acquisition and payment, if not voluntary—I do not know whether there are any situations where there would have been a voluntary deeding over to the crown of wetland areas.

There are also circumstances in which private land owners, recognizing the environmental value of a particular natural area, will agree not to develop that area to protect it for its values. That is done voluntarily on the part of the private land owner. Then you get into other situations of the conservation authorities' responsibility for flood control and erosion control. There would be different kinds of circumstances. There are some cases in which land in a flood area is expropriated for an erosion control project and compensation paid. There are other guidelines that are applied by conservation authorities in terms of what kind of development could take place on a flood plain for the sake of the safety and protection of people in that area.

The whole issue of the rights of the private land owner is certainly a very sensitive one, and one that I think, in each of the different kinds of circumstances we are involved in, we would be concerned about.

Mr Matrundola: With due respect, I understand what you are saying. Probably we are confusing here the erosion of the land and the erosion of the rights of the owner, such as the right to own, to sell, to give it away, to do whatever he intends to do. Those are the rights of the owner, and there are more. This is my concern now. I have the concern of small property owners. I have had the experience of seeing, because my background has been real estate for the last 26 or 27 years, a lot of small land owners having been usurped of their rights because this is expropriated, that is taken, the other thing is taken and so forth.

I really have a concern now. For someone who has a large tract of land, that is not a problem, because he can give some away and that is fine. It is give and take; I understand that. I am concerned about small land owners; they are my concern. It is very easy for government agencies to come and take. Sure, take it, buy it or pay the mortgage and then let's see. Let's reverse the side of the counter and then let's see how easy or difficult it

is. That is my concern, and I believe that as a member of the provincial Parliament, it is also my duty to defend the rights of the small property owners.

I wanted to make that point. Thank you very much.

Mr Carrothers: I just want to make clear in my mind the regulatory structure. The Trees Act gives certain bylaw powers to municipalities to control the cutting of trees within their jurisdictions. The issue then is starting to become whether the bylaws are strong enough or, perhaps as Marietta was suggesting, whether the financial resources are there to prosecute under these bylaws, thereby making the things effective.

I take it then, and pardon my ignorance, that when we start hearing about licences to cut trees, those are licences to cut on crown lands, not private lands.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Yes.

Mr Carrothers: On private land, I may have some forest management arrangement which I get into so that someone will share with me the cost of regenerating my forest. Is that what gets me into these things? If I have a piece of land I want to use for commercial logging—I assume there is no bylaw for the moment—then am I completely free to do what I wish, or do I still have to come and get a permit to cut those trees?

Hon Mrs McLeod: You would need a work permit for carrying out activity even on private lands that would be related to, for example, our concern about the fire protection act. I think there might be another piece of legislation or two which do require work permits for work to be done on private lands, with a view to the ministry, for example, being aware of where work is being carried out so that we can ensure that there is ability to respond to the potential fire dangers, for example.

Mr Carrothers: Do I have to regenerate within my property if I cut?

Hon Mrs McLeod: If you were working with a forest management agreement on private lands of the type that was being described earlier, then there would probably be some commitments for regeneration that are built into that agreement. If you were not working with that type of agreement, you would not have that commitment to regenerate.

Miss Roberts: Going back to Ducks Unlimited and the development of wetlands, a constituent of mine wrote to you and you wrote back to him just about a month ago regarding the match-the-dollar program where Ducks Unlimited is suggesting some funding between conservation and medical projects. I will just read it to you to refresh your memory:

"We have allocated all the moneys available for 1990 donations, so we have a year to discuss it. For the next several years I will have approximately \$50,000 Canadian to designate for conservation and medical endeavours. It is our intention to spread this as far as we can."

What they are looking at is the match for dollars, if there is such a program, and talking about that. Mr Christie is not here today.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Did you want some more details on that?

Miss Roberts: That is right.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Mr Bugar is the assistant deputy minister for southern Ontario.

Mr Bugar: We have an agreement with the federal government and with, now, Ducks Unlimited. I am sorry I can-

not be very precise about exactly what the matching is, but it is an arrangement whereby all three or four parties put money together, if you will, to accomplish projects that none of us can do individually. We do have a formal agreement and we can get the details of what that is. I am sorry, I just cannot spell out right now whether it is one dollar for one dollar or one dollar for two or what it is.

Miss Roberts: Who has control of those programs?

1730

Mr Bugar: There is a steering committee that meets. Programs are submitted; our ministry can submit them, conservation authorities can submit them, Ducks Unlimited can submit them. There is then a joint steering committee that sits down and prioritizes what will be funded in that particular year.

Miss Roberts: If I might go to another area, and that is the shoreline area, there has been a lot of shoreline mapping being done in the last little while along the Great Lakes. I would like to know how much has been completed, how much more has to be done and what funding is available to the conservation authorities. I think it has been the conservation authorities that have taken the lead in this.

Mr Lewis: We are involved in a mapping program with the federal government under the Canada-Ontario flood damage reduction program, and since about 1985-86 we have been directing the major portion of the funding in that activity, which is about \$2 million a year, towards carrying out mapping on the Great Lakes.

Later this year we will have completed the major portion of the mapping on Lake Huron and Lake Erie. We still have to do Lake Ontario, and the federal-provincial agreement runs out in March 1992. I do not think we will have funds left within that agreement to complete Lake Ontario, but we will be starting on the Lake Ontario mapping this year.

Miss Roberts: Once the mapping is completed, what do you intend to use it for and how is it going to be helpful? There has been quite a bit of money put into it.

Mr Lewis: The mapping will be used by the conservation authorities in their individual shoreline management programs that will help in their resource management programs in identifying flood- and erosion-prone areas and in administering their regulations so that we will prevent future flood damages along the Great Lakes in the event of higher lake levels coming again.

Miss Roberts: Basically, it is just to let us know what the shoreline is now, and then to keep some track on where it goes from here to there in the next 20 years. Is that the purpose behind the mapping?

Mr Lewis: Yes. The mapping is to identify the flooding and erosion hazards. That is primarily why we are doing it under the program, but that information will also be useful in identifying wetland areas, mapping the extent of these areas and also in our other resource management programs.

Miss Roberts: Are you going to give control to the conservation authorities, or do they already have the control with the shoreline mapping, the same way they do with floodplain mapping?

Mr Lewis: Yes.

Miss Roberts: Therefore, it will be helpful to a lot of the smaller municipalities along the lake shores.

Mr Lewis: That is the intent of carrying out the mapping.

Miss Roberts: Is that already in existence in regulations so that if I wanted to build my house on a cliff, the conservation authority would know it was a hazard? I look at Long Point and other places where they are building cottages all the time. They are expensive and sometimes in very hazardous areas. Is that there now?

Mr Lewis: The mechanism is there to allow conservation authorities to implement those types of regulations. Because we are in the process of carrying out the mapping and identifying the flooding and erosion hazards, they have not been put in place in all places at this stage. The intention of the program is to move forward along those lines.

Miss Roberts: Can I go back to the floodplain mapping and the conservation authorities? They have updated the 100-year floodplain in most of the conservation authorities, I believe. Is that now complete?

Mr Lewis: As I said earlier, most recently our mapping efforts have been diverted to the Great Lakes shorelines, but we are continuing with the flood-line mapping along the river valleys. We have been at that for some time, so I think once we get through the process we will be in the process of remapping or updating some of these maps to reflect current conditions.

Miss Roberts: How much of the province is updated for floodplaining?

Mr Lewis: I do not have that figure right now, but that is something we will be looking at and putting together shortly to negotiate with the federal government for a new agreement.

Miss Roberts: Is that usually funded half and half between the two governments?

Mr Lewis: The current funding is 50% by the federal government, 40% by the province and 10% by the local conservation authority or a municipality outside a conservation authority.

Miss Roberts: Is that considered a capital project for funding for the conservation authorities?

Mr Lewis: Yes, it is.

Miss Roberts: Does anybody else have any questions? If not, I will continue on. If my friend from the north has anything he wishes to ask about, I will gladly yield.

The Chair: Yes, Mr Wildman has a question. I can tell.

Miss Roberts: Be brief.

Mr Wildman: Yes, I will.

The discussion about private land forestry interested me. It reminded me of a story. Just a few years ago, not long before Christmas, a farmer in my riding was out in the back 40 when he saw a pickup truck come along. Two people got out, jumped over the fence and cut down a spruce tree in one of his fields. So he jumped in his pickup truck and followed them all the way into Sault Ste Marie. This is about 40 miles. There was a nice blue spruce on the guy's lawn. The guy got out and took the farmer's spruce tree into the house. The farmer got out and cut down a blue spruce tree on the guy's lawn. That would be quite a court case.

At any rate, perhaps the minister could correct the record. I think there were a couple of errors put forward. First, I do not think the Trees Act applies in an area that is a territorial district, even if it is a township municipality. I think it does not apply in an unincorporated county, which in effect means it does not apply north of the French River.

Second, I think the argument about permits for cutting on private lands in areas where the Trees Act does not apply needs to be clarified. Certainly in terms of fire hazard the ministry does have the ability to regulate. I know of instances in my area where the ministry has gone to private land owners and said to them, "Look, we'd rather you didn't do this clear-cutting that you're planning to do in your particular area because it may affect the wetland" or a bird sanctuary or fish in a particular river, if you're close to the headwaters of a river and so on, and all it is, is advice.

They cannot enforce that. Perhaps they should. Perhaps we should have regulations like they have in Sweden where the county forester can come in and say, "You will do this," and if they do not do it, then the local government does it and charges the land owner. I do not believe we are in that situation yet, and I am not sure Mr Matrundola would agree with it if we were.

Hon Mrs McLeod: I will ask Mr Goodman whether or not there is a clarification to the record. I am not sure that there needs to be a clarification to the record on the second issue, because there is a work permit required for carrying out work on private lands. I do not think I indicated that there could be a prohibition within a fire zone.

Mr Wildman: I understand it and I agree with it, but I think the impression given, along the questions from my friend Mr Carrothers, was that if it was not a fire hazard but he wanted to clear-cut his area, he would have to get some kind of regulatory agreement, even if the municipality did not have a bylaw under the Trees Act. I do not think that was a correct impression.

Hon Mrs McLeod: To correct the record to that extent then, certainly there is not a way in which we could prohibit or require licensing for carrying out the tree cutting, but a work permit is required to carry out the work.

Mr Goodman: There are exceptional cases all across Ontario where the title to the property still has some old provisions that reserve particular species to the crown. If in fact that was the case, then the crown does have some responsibility to approve that. Those are rare, but they still exist. I think we want to clarify for the record the situation with the Trees Act applying to unorganized territory, and we will attempt to get an answer.

Mr Wildman: I appreciate that. I am not talking about unorganized territory; I am talking about incorporated townships that are within territorial districts of regional governments in northern Ontario and outside county governments.

Mr Goodman: Yes. I understand your question, and we will seek to clarify it.

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Mr Carrothers: My interest was twiggled here by this reservation of particular species to the crown. I am just curious, going back to an older life which did include a little bit of land title searching and certification of titles, what steps are taken by the crown—obviously, that is in the original grant, which could be 200 years ago—to make sure that this is known within a system of 40-year land title searches? Very few people go back

to the original grant from the crown at this point. I am just wondering whether you have a list of those properties and whether there is any way that people know they happen to be under that restriction.

Mr Wildman: He hasn't, but Elizabeth R has.

Mr Goodman: We are getting in over our heads on this one, and would need to clarify it. I would say that on large industrial freehold, particularly in the north, there was pine reserved. They are well aware of those reservations.

Mr Wildman: For the Royal Navy.

Mr Goodman: Exactly.

Mr Carrothers: They originally were interested in the oaks in Oakville. This is interesting.

The Chair: I suggested that the member might wish to ask the judge beside him, but that did not seem to work.

Mr Pollock: I doubt very much if there are many rural municipalities that have any bylaws forbidding tree cutting. Sometimes there is a bylaw regulating the size of the tree you can cut. You cannot cut a tree below a foot in diameter at the stump.

In some particular situations, especially in the rural areas where I come from, trees are a bloody weed. They cause all kinds of problems, especially soft maple. It would cost you a fortune sometimes to just try to keep them trimmed down and that sort of thing. The only way to really resolve it is to get in a big backhoe and tear them out and put them into one field.

Mr Wildman: Not even for windbreaks.

Hon Mrs McLeod: They sequester carbon. That is new jargon I have also acquired.

Mr Pollock: I even see a few plantations out there of basswood, which is another weed, practically, and also poplar, which is getting pretty close to a weed too in some people's eyes. Is there any situation where your ministry tries to encourage the planting of trees that are actually good timber?

Hon Mrs McLeod: On the point Mr Wildman raised earlier, we do in fact have a review of our private lands forest strategy under way in the ministry now. The focus of that review would be to look at ways in which we could encourage private land owners to enhance the value of the wood on their lands through management and through regeneration of species that would be good species for the commercial harvest so that they could in fact have a sustainable development harvest on their particular lands. That would be one of the focuses of that review.

Mr Pollock: But there is nothing in place right at the present.

Mr Tough: Yes, there is.

Hon Mrs McLeod: There is a program currently in which we can work with private land owners through the woodlands

improvement program in which we would provide advice and, where there is harvesting going on, the ministry can help with marking of trees to provide for good management of that particular woodlot. The review will be looking at ways in which we could enhance that and perhaps maximize the long-term value that the private land owner will have.

The Chair: Excuse me just a second. One of the things that is encouraging about the things you have said is that you are willing to talk to the conservation authorities. I think really that is new information, not from you, but I think it is new information that you are prepared to listen to conservation authorities individually. Except for Mr Wildman, we all have an interest in that subject. Thank you for that. I am going to make sure that my conservation authority does talk to you since you have encouraged it to so do.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We actually will have people going out to talk to them.

The Chair: I am going to check Hansard carefully, okay? In any event, we can have some more questions from Miss Roberts or we can wrap up. Which do you prefer?

Miss Roberts: Wrap up, then. I do not want to stop you from anything you would like to do, Mr Chairman.

The Chair: I like that.

Mr Wildman: Just one question. I do not want to take away from Miss Roberts's time. What I would like to know is how the minister is going to respond to the questions that were raised which, because of time, we have not had a chance to deal with in the estimates.

Hon Mrs McLeod: We do have responses which, as you know, could have been read into the record today. You have tabled some additional questions today. I think we could undertake to file full responses to all past questions and today's questions with the clerk of the committee.

Mr Wildman: Fine.

The Chair: The minister is very co-operative in that respect.

We were considering the estimates of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Vote 2801 agreed to.

Votes 2802 to 2805, inclusive, agreed to.

The Chair: The estimates will be reported in the now formal manner. I thank the minister very much.

Hon Mrs McLeod: Can I just say I appreciate both the range and the depth of interest shown by members of the committee.

The Chair: I am sure they will appreciate that. We will meet tomorrow at 3:30.

The committee adjourned at 1747.

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 Smith, E. Joan (London South L)
 Villeneuve, Noble (Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry PC)

Substitutions:

Carrothers, Douglas A. (Oakville South L) for Mr Cleary
 Pollock, Jim (Hastings-Peterborough PC) for Mr Villeneuve

Clerk: Brown, Harold

Staff:

Campbell, Elaine, Research Officer, Legislative Research Service

Witnesses:

From the Ministry of Natural Resources:
 Tough, George, Deputy Minister
 Bugar, Bob, Assistant Deputy Minister
 Goodman, John, Executive Director, Forest Resources Group
 Lingenfelter, Lou, Director, Aviation Fire Management
 Lewis, Maurice, Director, Conservation Authorities and Water Management Branch
 Gordon, Roger, A/ADM—Administration

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 34th Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 20 June 1990

Standing committee on estimates

Committee schedule

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 34^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Le mercredi 20 juin 1990

Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Programme de comité



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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario
Editor of Debates: Peter Brannan

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario
Éditeur des débats : Peter Brannan

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Wednesday 20 June 1990

The committee met at 1549 in committee room 2.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

The Chair: We shall commence the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to select the ministries whose estimates we wish to consider in the second part of the 1990 estimates. As I understand the rules, the first choice would go to the New Democratic Party, the official opposition party. Mr Charlton, do you have your requests—"requests" is the wrong word—those that you have chosen, with you?

Mr Charlton: No, I do not. The caucus yesterday, unfortunately, spent all of its time discussing the Meech Lake issue and we never got to the item on the agenda. The caucus will deal with it on Tuesday. All I can tell you is that the executive of the caucus decided last Thursday that we should do two and split it at seven and a half each again. I will be in a position to provide the clerk with the names of the two ministries after our caucus meeting on Tuesday.

Miss Roberts: My position is that we have chosen already Tourism and Recreation and Community and Social Services. We would therefore choose the Attorney General's office. Are you still going to go with Native Affairs, Mr Charlton?

Mr Charlton: Yes.

Miss Roberts: You are, so then most likely the Attorney General and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology. Are you still going to have seven and a half hours on native affairs?

Mr Charlton: As far as I know. I have not discussed the reduction with the critic.

The Chair: I am sure we can agree to reduce at some point later on, but they really should stay on the record as they presently are. The second choice in the matter goes to the third party. It is a bit complicated by the fact that the top two choices have not been made yet. I will suggest that the three choices of the third party are in this order—only two of them will be chosen, of course—Health, Environment and northern affairs, two of those for seven and a half hours. If it happens that the NDP chooses two of them, I will have to go back to my caucus and get a fourth one.

Mr Charlton: Just to help you out in that respect, although I cannot unfortunately tell you for certain, one of the two that our caucus is looking at is Housing.

Miss Roberts: That is why I did not mention Housing.

Mr Charlton: The reason they wanted to discuss it at caucus yesterday was because of the—presumably the caucus could overturn the decision on Housing, but to discuss with caucus the best of three possibilities for the second choice. I think Housing will probably be on the list, although theoretically the caucus next Tuesday could change that.

The Chair: Can we get enough information from the government hopefully to settle this and proceed without another meeting?

Miss Roberts: As far as I am concerned, the AG and MITT are our choices. I am sorry. That is the wrong order. MITT first and then AG, and that is for seven and a half hours each.

Do you expect to be proceeding on the basis of we would start with the Office Responsible for Native Affairs, then Agriculture and Food and down that list, or do you expect to start at the new list?

The Chair: The list as is here. If there is no conflict with all this, if northern affairs would be off if we do not need it and we will get your two choices, I do believe that we should have those in order that we can report to the House next Tuesday if, for any reason, we wind up or whatever.

Mr Charlton: I can have them to you by noon on Tuesday.

The Chair: That is what we need. There is no need at all for a meeting if they all jibe.

Miss Roberts: No, as long as you do not choose one that we have already chosen. If you do, we will make another choice and I can just be advised by the Chair. I think that would be helpful.

Mr Charlton: I do not think there is that possibility from us. So the three you were suggesting, Mr Chairman, were?

The Chair: Health, Environment and northern affairs, in that order.

Miss Roberts: And you dropped off northern affairs?

The Chair: We will. It is there for safety.

Mr Charlton: Yes, neither of the other two wants to drop off northern affairs.

Miss Roberts: And you expect Housing is going to be one of them?

Mr Charlton: I expect Housing will be one of our two. I cannot predict the order. It is an expectation. It is the one that did not seem to be in dispute at the executive, but because we never had the discussion at caucus yesterday, I cannot swear to that.

Miss Roberts: I assume that as soon as this is completed and we have reported to the House, you will send information directly to those ministries that are still to be heard from with an indication that they should be ready to have estimates as soon as we return to the House, which, if it is 15 July, they should be—I think that should be important. I would endorse that the Chair do that as quickly as possible.

The Chair: What you are asking is a nice thing to do, except that this is printed every day.

Miss Roberts: Yes, I understand that, but because we had such a difficulty the last time around scheduling things, I think

we should be as clear as we possibly can on the order that they are going to be in. Then, although it may not start the first week we are back at the House, native affairs will be aware that it is going to be the first one coming up and that it should be very clear that its minister is available and the staff is available. Indeed, after that, Ag and Food should be ready and not have us be put off again. I do not think we can always bend our agenda, as we have had to in the past. That is what you always do anyway, is it not?

Clerk of the Committee: That is all we can do.

Miss Roberts: I would just appreciate it and I will make sure that I continue in my practice of informing—

The Chair: Any other points?

Clerk of the Committee: No, other than to advise the board to approve the budget.

The Chair: Subject to the House leaders, I am not sure about the wisdom or the protocol of meeting on 25 September, for instance, which I think is a Tuesday. We are going to be very, very short of time. We are just sitting here picking these only because the rules say we must. We are not going to get to any of them.

We start on 25 September at the earliest and we have to have a report in by 16 November and we meet Tuesdays and Wednesdays after question period. It is all academic, but it would be nice to start the day we come back. Can we do that? Does anybody know? We can ask the clerk to request that we be able to meet on 25 September, but I do not think we can.

Mr Charlton: Why?

Miss Roberts: Because the House leaders have not ordered their business.

The Chair: Which they may or may not be able to do the week before. However, without getting into it too deeply, does anybody object to meeting on 25 and 26 September for starters?

Miss Roberts: No.

The Chair: And if it is not possible, it is not possible.

Miss Roberts: That is right. Subject to the agreement of the House leaders, I would suggest that we push to meet as early as possible upon our return.

The Chair: Yes. Then we could delegate the member for Elgin to speak to the Premier and tell him that we do not want this estimates process interfered with by any election call.

Miss Roberts: I think that would be an appropriate thing to do. I will speak to him directly on that.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Miss Roberts: My influence has not been known to be very significant in the past.

The Chair: You can keep quiet about this one. If you win it, fine, and if you lose, just do not say anything. We will give you all the credit.

The committee adjourned at 1600.

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